

# Workplace Violence and Victimization

Homicide is the third leading cause of fatal occupational injury for all workers, and the second leading cause of fatal occupational injury for women. (Iowa Injury Prevention Research Center (IPRC). February 2002. *Workplace Violence: A Report to the Nation*. Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa.)

There were 639 homicides in the workplace in 2001, down from the 677 homicides that took place at work in 2000. (Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). November 2002. *BLS Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.)

In 2000, there were 18,400 non-fatal assaults and violent acts in the workplace resulting in an average of five lost workdays per victimization due to injuries. (Ibid.)

Firearms were used in 505 of the workplace homicides in 2001. (Ibid.)

Robbery is the principle motive in workplace homicides. Of the 3,829 job-related homicides occurring between 1996 and 2000, more than half took place in the retail industry. (Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). 2001. *Workplace Violence*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Labor.)

Taxicab drivers, police, private guards, and managers of food serving establishments are at greatest risk of assaults resulting in fatal injuries. Risk factors that contribute to their vulnerability include: contact with the public; exchange of money; delivery of passengers, goods, and services; having a mobile workplace; working with unstable or volatile persons; working alone; working late at night; working in high crime areas; and/or guarding valuable property. (Ibid.)

Between 1993 and 1999, violent crime in the workplace declined 44 percent. The violent crime rate for whites (13 per 1000 in the workforce) was 25 percent higher than the rate for blacks (10 per 1000) and 59 percent higher than the rate for other races (8 per

1000). The rate of workplace victimization for whites contrasts with the overall violent crime rate for which blacks have the highest rate of victimization. (Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) December 2001. *Violence in the Workplace, 1993-99*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)

One third of victims of workplace violence between 1993 and 1999 reported that they believed that the perpetrator was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the crime. (Ibid.)

About 2/3 of all robberies, aggravated assaults, and simple assaults in the workplace were committed against males between 1993 and 1999. (Ibid.)

Males victimized at work report the crime to the police about 50 percent of the time, whereas females victimized at work report about 40 percent of the time. Rape and sexual assault were reported about 24 percent of the time to the police. (Ibid.)

During 1993-1999, 84 percent of all workplace homicides were committed by perpetrators that were strangers to the victims. Co-workers and former co-workers were responsible for 7 percent of the workplace homicides, and husbands and boyfriends were responsible for three percent of the workplace homicides. (Ibid.)

The number of workplace homicides committed by a husband was 40 times the number of homicides committed by a wife during the period 1993-1999. (Ibid.)

Studies indicate that 60 to 70 percent of women law enforcement officers experience sexual/gender harassment but only four to six percent report it. (Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA). 2001. *Recruiting and Retaining Women: A Self-Assessment Guide for Law Enforcement*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.)