



**LIONS GATE**

RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP

**WHITEPAPER**

**OUR EXPERTISE IS YOUR PEACE OF MIND**

**WORKPLACE THREAT MANAGEMENT**

# WORKPLACE THREAT MANAGEMENT

The difference between workplace violence investigations and workplace threat management, can be easily misunderstood by employers and HR professionals. This white paper examines why this is a problem and provides insightful guidance on the subject.

## Definitions

Defining ‘workplace violence investigations’ is a straightforward and literal task – quite simply, investigating incidents of violence in the workplace. However, more important is understanding the investigation purpose and consequent actions.





**“The main goal of investigating workplace violence is to prevent similar incidents from happening again”.**

In order to do that, you need to uncover the root cause of the incident. After you determine the cause of the violent act, you can make the necessary changes to the situation or your organization to prevent future issues. A well-supported and properly evidenced root-cause analysis ensures the violent person is supported and/or disciplined properly, but also helps you make appropriate, effective recommendations for change.

Threat Management is equally literal on the face of it but what is encompassed in threat management? According to multiple open-source definitions it is an umbrella term for computer security and information security programs instituted within an organization and protection against network threats. This narrow lens view perpetuated by open source is misleading because it diverts internet searchers away from the physical threat management dimension which came into being thousands of years before ‘cyber’ even became a word in the dictionary.

**“Threat management is more about diverting direction of interest, diminishing dangerous and concerning behaviors, and altering a path toward targeted violence”.**

1.

## Narrow Focus

The idiom “cannot see the forest for the trees” comes to mind which means that a person or organization cannot see the big picture because the focus is too much on the details. This can also happen when an investigation of workplace violence is being conducted and information relevant to a threat assessment may be overlooked, ignored or just not there. Not seeing the bigger ‘workplace threat management’ picture is a problem for HR Professionals and their employers.

2.

## Warning Signs

Employers are typically aware that the context leading to workplace violence is usually one in which a current or former employee perceives him or herself as having been gravely humiliated, wronged, or betrayed in some way. The question is are employers equally aware of the important “warning signs” that have come to be identified as clues to possible violence? Or who to turn to when they suddenly become the unwanted preoccupation of a threatening individual? The pathway to violence is rarely sudden and impulsive, but almost invariably an escalating one.

3.

## Threat Events

Although actual incidents of work-related targeted violence are statistically rare, instances of threats and other warning signs are a common occurrence in workplaces of any size and require appropriate, efficient methods of informed monitoring and screening. The presence of warning signs does not necessarily mean that someone will be violent, only that there is a threshold of concern. The context of a situation and what is known about an individual overall may need to be considered for risk screening and assessment. This will help prevent over-reacting to a situation or treating someone unfairly based on very little information.

4.

## Best Practice and Litigation Exposure

There is some excellent accessible practice for all organizations, particularly those conscious of a need to better insulate themselves against litigation. It is extremely important for all organizations to be able to demonstrate that their actions to prevent or investigate incidents of workplace violence are reasonable and prudent. Inability to deliver this leaves any organization open to exposure. This is also a further purpose behind an all-encompassing threat management program including thorough workplace violence investigations.

## WHAT DOES LIONS GATE RECOMMEND?



### **Conduct or commission a workplace assessment that identifies risks of harassment and violence.**

As part of that reasonable and prudent action, employers need to conduct or commission a workplace assessment that identifies risks of harassment and violence, resulting in implemented preventive measures. To maintain currency the assessment should be revisited every three years or where a particular incident or series of incidents highlight gaps or process flaws.



### **Guide all staff appropriately, as to what the organization expects and how employees deliver on those expectations.**

- Have comprehensive workplace harassment and violence prevention policies and procedures in place.
- Have emergency procedures to be followed for occurrences of harassment and violence.
- Provide education and raising awareness of the above for employers, employees, workplace committee members and health and safety representatives.

It is essential that all staff are appropriately guided as to what the organization expects and how employees deliver on those expectations. This is achieved through the development of comprehensive workplace harassment and violence prevention policies and procedures supported by education and training for employers, employees, workplace committee members and health and safety representatives. This should also include documented emergency procedures to be followed in situations where an occurrence of harassment and violence poses an immediate danger to the health and safety of employees or when there is a threat of such an occurrence happening in the workplace.





## Pro-Active Investigation Plan

- Have a plan in place which includes the selection of a ‘competent person’ investigator with the necessary education, training, and qualifications.

If your preventive strategies fail and you are faced with a workplace violence incident that requires investigation then you need to ensure the investigator you select has the necessary education, training, and qualifications, with additional consideration given to the impartiality, of a “competent person” investigator who may formally investigate an incident of harassment and violence in the workplace. That may well require the investigation to be outsourced.



## Implementing Corrective Measures

By implementing recommended corrective measures identified in the ‘competent persons’ investigation report, as deemed appropriate by the workplace committee and workplace assessment, you ensure lessons learned inform future pro-active and preventive threat management.



## Universally Available Support

- Ensure access to available information and support services is universal across your organization.

To secure staff buy-in for your workplace violence and harassment program the employers provision of support to each party involved in an incident of workplace harassment and violence needs to be balanced and impartial. Access to available information and support services should also be universally accessible. Further buy-in comes when your resolution process is employee driven and clearly states how to submit and address a complaint, establish appropriate time frames throughout the process, and which emphasizes the privacy of all parties.





## Universal Organizational Response

- Make sure all reports and near misses are responded to; and not selective.
- Make sure your resolution process is clear and easy to follow.

It is also essential that all reports and near misses are responded to; and not selectively. That universal inclusion will help you avoid claims of favouritism which can only exacerbate the potential for further incidents. Any perception of unfairness must be avoided. Near misses are excellent indicators and add further data into the mix for analysis under assessment. Your process should include multiple options for resolution: early resolution, conciliation, and investigation.



## Accurate Records and Data Protection

- Keep accurate complete records and protect confidentiality.

Keeping accurate records and protecting personal data is also of paramount importance. This includes all notifications of harassment and violence in your workplace; records of the actions taken to address the notifications; records of the decisions taken where there is an inability for the parties to agree on an issue; and records of any delays to the timelines.



## Adhere to Legislative and Regulatory Requirements

In managing all of the above be mindful of the need to adhere to legislative and regulatory requirements.

- Examine potential exposures to litigation and ensure you can argue that your provisions meet 'reasonable and prudent' under scrutiny or challenge.
- Fully examine your responsibilities under occupier liability and duty of care.





## RETURN ON INVESTMENT

Done well a pro-active preventive threat management strategy within a program can save an organization money, resources and reduce exposure to litigation. Within that threat management strategy, and also done well, a workplace investigation can save the organization money and resources, as well as, ensuring the health and safety of employees. It is neither one nor the other in isolation; it is a front to back, prevent, respond, support, approach that will generate return on investment.

# LIONS GATE RISK MANAGEMENT GROUP SERVICES

Lions Gate Risk Management Group have assisted many HR Professionals and Investigators to navigate successful outcomes for these very serious files. This is in part due to LGRMG having professional investigators who are also threat assessment professionals who have first-hand knowledge drawn from personal and collective investigative experience, educational background, specialized training and who can recognize the “warning signs”. Lions Gate Risk Management Group can assist in an advisory role or can work with you in developing a “threat management team model” for your organization, which is a viable and effective method for assessing violence. A ‘threat assessment and management team’ is a multidisciplinary body, assembled to assess and recommend management strategies for persons of concern and threats of violence.

Investigations require a skilled investigator with the personal attributes to engage parties, methodically collect and assess information and deliver a well formulated opinion. If your investigator is also a threat assessment professional, that broader understanding can only enhance the investigation. Each of these steps are important and interconnected. It is important to ensure that the appointed investigator is subjectively impartial to all parties before they begin their investigation to ensure that the individual can be a competent person for the purpose of the Code. The Lions Gate team has such trained Investigators who have knowledge of the legislation, and who will ensure a thorough investigative process that supports informed decision-making.



## SOME OF THE WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND HARASSMENT SERVICES WE INCLUDE:

1. Assessments
2. Policy and Procedure Development
3. Program Development
4. Investigations
5. Background Investigations
6. Due Diligence Checks

For more information, please contact us at [info@lgrmg.ca](mailto:info@lgrmg.ca)  
For any support and assistance call 1.604.383.0020 or toll-free at 1.800.212.2026  
or visit [www.lgrmg.ca](http://www.lgrmg.ca). Our expertise is your peace of mind.

# ABOUT THE AUTHOR

## **MIKE FRANKLIN**

CPP®, ADCERTED&CP, SAFE-APTM, LCGI

Mike brings over 40 years of security experience to risk management. As Vice President of Risk Management and Community Safety, he has led and continues to lead multiple security risk assessments, and designing out crime 'new build' projects. He also develops community safety and security assessment programs for beleaguered communities, and produces 'security operations plans'; and 'security management programs' for all client sectors. He is well versed in federal, provincial, municipal and international assessment methods and their applications, and applies fixed and/or hybrid risk assessment methodologies to meet specific client needs, for public entities at all levels of government; and private entities, from blue chip clients to critical infrastructure clients, energy sector clients, commercial and business sector clients, First Nations clients, education sector clients and the Courts.

Mike was trained by the UK Security Service and is a leader in situational security and integrated security systems and solutions including security technologies. Mike has been responsible for designing sophisticated networks that are appropriate, realistic and risk commensurate, and developing outcome specifications for deployment in both public and private domains. Balanced and effective layered security solutions for the client, that properly mitigate risk, requiring no more than necessary measures and technologies to achieve that outcome. Mike has also been trained by the UK Home Office Scientific Development Branch in Integrated Security Systems and the UK National Counter Terrorism Security Office on Hostile Vehicle Mitigation.

Mike is board certified in security management by ASIS International and is a Certified Protection Professional. The Certified Protection Professional (CPP)(r) credential is globally recognised as providing demonstrable proof of knowledge and management skills in seven key domains of security; Security Principles and Practices, Business Principles & Practices, Investigations, Personnel Security, Physical Security, Information Security and Crisis Management. Mike has an Advanced Certificate in Environmental Design and Crime Prevention, a Licentiate (LCGI) Higher Professional Diploma, SVQ/NVQ level 4. Mike has an IVQ Advanced Diploma, Level 3 International Award and Certificate in Delivering Learning and taught law enforcement officers and senior security managers for the UK Home Office and the UK National Policing Improvement Agency. Mike is a SAFE Design Accredited Professional (SAFE-AP(tm)) and accredited trainer and a Transport Canada Marine Facility Security Officer (MFSO).

## **Contributors**

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*your team*

# LEADING THE WAY

Lion Gate Risk Management Group is Canada's leading security and risk management firm providing comprehensive investigation, intelligence, security, and protection services.



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Chief Executive Officer

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**DOUG MAYNARD**

President and COO

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**MIKE MCCAFFERTY**

Vice President, Risk Management Services

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“THE PATHWAY TO VIOLENCE IS RARELY SUDDEN AND IMPULSIVE, BUT ALMOST INVARIABLY AN ESCALATING ONE.”

- Mike McCafferty, Vice President, Risk Management Services





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