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SUBJECT: Review of the Violence Prevention Program in the Suncoast District and
the Impact on Workplace Climate and Operations
(Audit Report Number ER-AR-99-002)

This report presents the results of a review of the violence prevention program in the Suncoast District and the impact on workplace climate and operations (Project Number 99EA007ER000). This audit report is the first in a series from an ongoing review of violence prevention efforts within the United States Postal Service (USPS), Southeast Area.

On the basis of our review, we conclude that the potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District facilities because District officials have not implemented effective violence prevention and response programs. Although the Vice President for the Southeast Area disagreed with our finding, the Suncoast District Manager advised us that actions have been taken to implement our recommendations. Management's responses and our evaluation of these responses are attached to the report.

We appreciate the cooperation and courtesies provided by your staff during the review. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact Chris Nicoloff, Director, Labor-Management or me, at (703) 248-2300.

//Signed//
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for Employee

Attachment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

This audit report is the first in a series from an ongoing review of violence prevention efforts within the United States Postal Service (USPS). The Suncoast District, located in the Southeast Area, was selected because of previous Office of Inspector General (OIG) work conducted there. Our overall objectives were to determine if the Suncoast District consistently communicated and enforced USPS policies regarding violent and inappropriate behavior in the workplace, and the effect violence prevention activities have on the workplace climate and operations.

Results In Brief

On the basis of our review, we conclude that the potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District facilities because District officials have not implemented effective violence prevention and response programs.

We found that the Suncoast District did not follow many of the violence prevention policies and procedures outlined in the May 1997 *Threat Assessment Team Guide* and the *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace*. We identified four deviations which could contribute to an unhealthy work environment:

- There existed inconsistent communication and enforcement of USPS policies and procedures regarding violent and inappropriate behavior in the workplace.
- Violence prevention strategies, goals, tasks, processes, and performance measures were not followed.
- Violence prevention training for supervisors, managers, and craft employees were not provided.
- The Crisis Management Plan was not fully developed or implemented.

The District's limited attention to violence prevention efforts could adversely affect workplace climate and USPS operations. Violence increases stress, inflicts emotional wounds, and lowers employee morale. Organizationally, it diminishes credibility, decreases productivity, creates work-specific tension, and may lead to damage of property.

Recommendations

The Vice President, Southeast Area Operations, should immediately require that:

1. The District and the Threat Assessment Team fully implement the USPS policies and procedures regarding violence in the workplace, paying particular attention to the *Threat Assessment Team Guide*.
2. The District's Zero Tolerance Policy be revised to mirror the USPS Zero Tolerance Policy. This revised policy must be communicated to all employees and enforced consistently.
3. Security Control Officers conduct physical security reviews of all District facilities as required by the Administrative Support Manual.
4. Attendance at violence awareness training for all craft employees, supervisors, and managers be mandatory.
5. The District and the Crisis Management Team fully implement the policies and procedures outlined in the *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace*.
6. A review be conducted of the events surrounding the two threats made by employees, as outlined in this report. The purpose of the review is to determine that the employees involved do not pose a potential threat to the workplace and other employees.
7. District management review the responses to all threat incidents made to the Threat Assessment Team to ensure that future recommendations made by Threat Assessment Team members are acted upon immediately.

**Summary of
Management's
Response**

The Area Vice President for the Southeast Area did not agree with the OIG conclusion that the potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District facilities. He stated "There is no valid nexus between the two to justify this conclusion." He agreed, however, that limited violence prevention efforts could adversely affect workplace climate.

The Vice President also did not agree there was a mandatory requirement for attendance at violence awareness training for all craft employees, supervisors, and managers. He stated, however, that the Southeast Area is committed to the appropriate implementation of the policies and procedures regarding violence prevention.

The Suncoast District Manager responded to all of the OIG recommendations and told us that significant action has been taken to implement the recommendations.

We have summarized management's responses in the report and included the full text of the comments in Appendices D, E, and F.

**Evaluation of
Management's
Response**

Although the Vice President for the Southeast Area did not agree with our overall finding, we believe that the District's planned or implemented actions are responsive to the recommendations and address the issues identified in this report.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The USPS is responsible for ensuring the safety of its employees by creating and maintaining a work environment that is violence-free. It has embraced the concept that a viable workplace violence prevention program is the first step in helping to ensure a violence-free workplace. It recognizes that such a program depends on a universal zero tolerance policy and a zero tolerance action plan that is consistently implemented for the management of threats, assaults, and other inappropriate workplace behavior.

In responding to the need for a violence prevention program, the USPS established several initiatives and strategies to prevent and minimize the potential risk for violence in the workplace. These initiatives are implemented throughout the USPS from the headquarters to Postal facilities in the field.

In December 1997, the Deputy Postmaster General directed USPS Headquarters to reevaluate existing systems and strategies designed to prevent workplace violence. This directive responded to the shooting at the Milwaukee Processing and Distribution Center and the hostage situation at the Denver General Mail Facility, both of which occurred in December 1997. The responsibility for reevaluation was assigned to the newly established Headquarters Crisis Management Systems and Process Team.

The USPS initiated several other actions to address workplace violence. It created the National Security Committee to review physical security issues, including security hardware, staffing, and procedures. It chartered the External Climate Review to provide an independent assessment of the workplace climate. Further, it tasked the Headquarters Threat Assessment Team to develop and maintain a process for alerting managers, at all levels, of the issues that could negatively impact the workplace climate.

The USPS *Administrative Support Manual* requires Security Control Officers or their designees to conduct annual physical security reviews at all facilities.

In May 1997, USPS Headquarters published the *Threat Assessment Team Guide*, Publication 108, and *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace*, Publication 107, for District implementation. These

guidelines require the districts to develop appropriate Threat Assessment and Crisis Management Teams, and team plans of operation.

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* assists the Threat Assessment Team in responding to and assessing the seriousness of violent and potentially violent situations. The *Guide* includes violence prevention strategies, goals, and tasks; and provides information on the Threat Assessment Team, processes, measurements of team performance, and the education and training of employees about violence prevention. In addition, the *Guide* establishes a zero tolerance policy that states that each and every violent act, or threat of violence, will elicit an immediate and firm response, which could involve discipline up to and including removal.

The *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace* provides guidance on how to respond to a work disruption due to an incidence of violence. It provides a model of a plan to delegate specific roles and responsibilities for dealing with a violent crisis; provides for the care and support of victims and their families; and establishes an orderly return to normal operations. It defines an act of violence as a suicide, homicide, assault, or hostage taking. The plan also provides information on how to complete a post-crisis evaluation.

**Objectives, Scope
And Methodology**

Our overall objectives were to determine: (1) if the Suncoast District consistently communicated and enforced USPS policies regarding violent and inappropriate behavior in the workplace, and (2) the effect violence prevention activities have on the workplace climate and operations. The specific objectives were to determine whether the District:

- complied with USPS policies and procedures regarding the prevention of violence in the workplace;
- maintained a zero tolerance policy to minimize potential threats to safety;
- created and implemented crisis management plans; and
- created and maintained a work environment perceived as fair and free from unlawful and inappropriate behavior.

We reviewed applicable statutes, regulations, policies, procedures, climate studies, and other documents, such as the Threat/Assault Incident Report Investigative worksheet reports. We reviewed United States General Accounting Office (GAO) reports related to labor-management issues. We interviewed USPS officials at the District, Area and Headquarters level to obtain information about the USPS workplace environment, and the procedures and policies implemented to ensure a safe and violence-free workplace.

To determine the District's compliance with policies and procedures, we reviewed the District's Threat Assessment Team activities, zero tolerance policy, and Crisis Management Plan. We compared the activities, policy, and plan to the USPS criteria regarding violence prevention strategies. We also reviewed the District's initiatives for addressing workplace environmental climate issues, including training programs on violence prevention.

We reviewed summary data concerning employee grievances, Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, and Employee Assistance Program opened cases for all Districts in the Southeast Area, including Suncoast, for all or part of the period of June 1997 through December 1998.¹ We analyzed the data to determine whether facilities in the District had been identified as having hostile work environments according to the *Threat Assessment Team Guide*, Publication 108. We also assessed data to determine trends in the District and how those trends compared to other districts within the Southeast Area. We also reviewed results from the 1998 and 1999 Voice of the Employee surveys conducted in the District.

We used statistical sampling methodologies to select 60 District facilities for review (see Appendix A). This sample was used to determine if annual physical security reviews had been conducted at the District facilities and if the facilities had copies of the District's Crisis Management Plan (see Appendices B and C, respectively).

¹ This audit period was selected because the *Threat Assessment Team Guide* and *Crisis Management Plan Guide* were not published until May 1997.

This audit was conducted from January through June 1999 in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and included such tests of internal controls, as we considered necessary under the circumstances. We discussed our conclusions and observations with appropriate management officials and included their comments, where appropriate.

AUDIT RESULTS

Potential for Violence in the Workplace

On the basis of our review, we believe the potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District facilities. The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* and *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace* clearly outline USPS policies and procedures for creating and maintaining a safe work environment. These guidelines have not been followed by the Suncoast Threat Assessment and Crisis Management Teams.

Districts that do not comply with these guidelines face a potential for violence in their facilities. Such violence increases stress, inflicts emotional wounds, and lowers employee morale. Organizationally, it diminishes credibility, decreases productivity, creates work-specific tension, and may lead to damage of property.

Implementation of Violence Prevention Program

The District's Acting Manager, Human Resources, did not implement an effective violence prevention program because District management did not consider the Threat Assessment Team process as a priority and because they considered it an informal process. Specifically, we found:

- three of the six violence prevention strategies were not fully implemented;
- four of the five Threat Assessment Team goals were not achieved;
- two of the three primary Threat Assessment Team tasks were not accomplished;
- seven of the eight Threat Assessment Team processes were not followed;
- Threat Assessment Team performance was not measured; and
- violence awareness training was not provided for all supervisors, managers, and craft employees.

Violence Prevention Strategies

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* outlines six organizational strategies for reducing workplace violence as follows:

- hiring the right people for the right job in the first place;
- ensuring appropriate safeguards for people and property;
- consistently communicating and enforcing Postal policy regarding violent and inappropriate behavior;
- creating a safe and healthy work environment;

- providing employee support in dealing with problems at work and home; and
- safely separating employees from employment.

According to a District Human Resources Specialist and the Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst, the District is implementing the violence prevention strategies relating to employee selection, employee support, and involuntary separation.² For example, the Human Resources Specialist told us that the District follows an in-depth pre-employment screening process including interviewing applicants; obtaining key documents from applicants; and obtaining background and reference checks, drug tests, and medical exams on all job candidates tentatively selected for employment. Further, the District Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst told us that the District does a lot of marketing to let employees know of the resources available to assist them in dealing with the problems of work and at home.

Additionally, the Human Resources Specialist said that by providing official discussions and letters of warning and suspensions for poor performers, as well as referrals to the Employee Assistance Program, the District affords poor performers with opportunities to improve. In the event that an employee must be separated, supervisors pay attention to the separated employee's attitude to ensure no apparent threat exists.

Our audit disclosed that Suncoast District officials did not fully implement the remaining three violence prevention strategies. Specifically, officials did not:

- publish, communicate, and enforce an adequate zero tolerance policy;
- ensure appropriate safeguards were provided for people and property; and
- conduct required assessments to assure that they had created and were maintaining a safe and healthy workplace environment.

² Since we will be reviewing these three processes in separate audits scheduled for fiscal year (FY) 2000, we did not verify nor validate that these three processes were being accomplished as indicated by District officials.

Zero Tolerance Policy

The USPS Joint Statement on Violence and Behavior in the Workplace, and the *Threat Assessment Team Guide* states that each and every act or threat of violence, regardless of the initiator, will elicit an immediate and firm response, including discipline up to the removal of an employee. Zero tolerance is based on the belief that no employee should have to work in an atmosphere of fear and intimidation that results when threats and inappropriate behavior remains unaddressed. It further states that all employees deserve a safe work environment.

We found that the Suncoast District did not publish, communicate, nor enforce an adequate zero tolerance policy. Specifically, the existing policy did not contain a statement that there would be no tolerance for persons who committed violent acts in the workplace. In addition, it did not provide definitions of a threat or assault to help employees understand and clarify when a threat, assault, or other acts of workplace violence had occurred. The policy also did not include the consequences when an employee made a threat or assaulted another employee.

The District's Senior Labor Relations Specialist stated that the reason the term "zero tolerance" was not defined in the District policy is because the Merit Systems Protection Board did not recognize "zero tolerance" as a basis to remove employees from their employment with the USPS.

We reviewed 24 documented threats where it appears that the USPS zero tolerance policy was not followed. For example, we found two incidents where the District did not enforce the USPS zero tolerance policy.

In the first incident, a Postal employee commented to another employee, "Don't be surprised if you see Placida Post Office on TV" and "I've got an AK-47." The employee hearing the comments felt threatened and uncomfortable and reported the incident to management. The Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst recommended to the Postmaster that the employee who made the comments be put on administrative

leave and that a Threat/Assault Incident Report³ be completed. The Postmaster requested that the Postal Inspection Service conduct an investigation. After their investigation, Postal Inspectors reported that the employee needed to be referred to the Employee Assistance Program. Neither the Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst nor the Postal Inspectors followed up to ensure that the employee actually received assistance. However, the Postmaster did refer the employee to the Employee Assistance Program. The District did not follow up to see if the employee needed additional assistance or if the employee's behavior had improved.

In the second incident, an employee shouted obscenities at another employee and also told him that he would "bury" him. The employee making the threat then removed his right shoe and began banging it on a metal shelf. The Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst was contacted and she suggested that the Postmaster conduct mediation between the two employees. The Postmaster declined the suggestion. An investigation of this incident by the Postal Inspection Service disclosed that the threatener suffered from stress, and management should take administrative action to help the employee with his problem. This, however, was not done.

To effectively communicate the zero tolerance policy, the District needs to clarify definitions and consequences so that all employees fully understand the policy and its potential ramifications. We believe managers must reinforce the policy by consistently applying it to employees who violate it, and by holding employees accountable for their actions. This is especially true in those instances where one employee is verbally abusing or physically touching another, in an aggressive or angry manner.

Appropriate Safeguards

The USPS *Administrative Support Manual* provides the primary criteria that a physical security survey be conducted at all USPS facilities. These surveys are to be conducted by the Security Control Officer or designee on an annual basis. The Security Control Officer is to submit a copy of the completed survey and notes for corrective action to the designated Inspection Service liaison. Survey results are to be maintained at the facility for two years.

³ The Suncoast District uses a Threat/Assault Incident Report Investigative worksheet to document the occurrence of a threat or assault. It includes sections covering general information, employees involved, investigative information, situation status, and is signed by the completing official.

The Suncoast District did not ensure appropriate safeguards were provided for people and property because they did not perform all the required annual physical security reviews. We project that the Suncoast District conducted annual physical security reviews in fiscal year (FY) 1997, for approximately 11 (5 percent) of the 217 facilities; and in FY 1998, for approximately 65 (30 percent) of the 217 facilities.⁴ It was also noted in a Postal Inspection Service Report,⁵ that at 21 facilities reviewed, 57 percent did not complete required annual security surveys to detect security weaknesses. Although Suncoast District was not included in this review, recommendations were made to USPS headquarters' management to ensure compliance with security regulations.

The District Security Control Officer cites several factors for the lack of physical security reviews:

- Security Control Officers and management were unaware of the criteria requiring such reviews. This was due in part to the fact that Security Control Officer training was provided for only the larger facilities (those with 26 or more employees).
- Lack of monitoring by the District of these reviews, because the District Security Control Officer thought that the Inspection Service was conducting the monitoring.
- Copies of survey forms were not provided to all facilities by District management or Postal Inspection Service officials.
- The ad hoc nature of the Security Control Officers' duties resulted in these duties not receiving priority treatment.

As a result of our audit, the District Security Control Officer told us that he has sent all facilities copies of the annual physical security review survey forms for completion.

⁴ We conducted a random sample review of 60 of 217 facilities in the Suncoast District. The 217 facilities included all post offices, stations, branches and postal stores. The processing and distribution centers are not included in the projection.

⁵ National Coordination Audit – "Security," September 1998, Case No. 022-1223635-PA(1), United States Postal Inspection Service.

We believe the facilities that did not conduct security reviews face a risk of workplace violence. We also believe the lack of security reviews could result in a loss or destruction of USPS property. Appendix B is a summary schedule reflecting the annual security reviews that were conducted in Suncoast District facilities during FYs 1997 and 1998.

Safe and Healthy
Workplace
Environment

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* states that it is imperative for the Threat Assessment Team to evaluate work climate issues and potential contributing events that may escalate the potential for violence. The *Guide* provides a list of environmental and societal factors that are relevant for review when making such determinations. These include Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, Employee Assistance Program contacts, and labor-management relations.

According to the Acting Manager, Human Resources, the District has not evaluated work climate issues and potential contributing events that could contribute to the potential for violence in the workplace. Our review of four of the potential violence indicators showed there are facilities in the District where violence could occur. These four indicators are employee grievances, Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, Employee Assistance Program “opened” cases, and results of various organizational climate assessments.

Compared to the other eight districts within the Southeast Area, the Suncoast District had relatively high numbers in three of the four indicators. Specifically, we found:

- In FY 1998,⁶ the District had the highest overall ratio of grievance appeals to employee of 37 to 100 for Step 3 appeals (see Exhibit 1). Additionally, the District had the highest ratio of contractual-related appeals, totaling 33 to 100 (see Exhibit 2). In a 1998 GAO report,⁷ union and management officials did not dispute that the total volume of grievances to employees—a ratio of 13 to 100—was too high.

⁶ We used only FY 1998 grievance data because subsequent data was not readily available at either the Postal Service or Office of Inspector General during the audit.

⁷ “U.S. Postal Service Little Progress Made in Addressing Persistent Labor-Management Problems,” October 1997, GAO/GGD-98-1.

The District also had the second highest ratio of 4 to 100 for discipline-related grievance appeals to employees (see Exhibit 3).

- Between June 1, 1997, and December 31, 1998, the District had the second highest ratio of 1 to 23 of Equal Employment Opportunity formal complaints to employees in the Southeast Area (see Exhibit 4).
- For the period July 1997 through November 1998,⁸ the District had the third highest ratio—1 to 16—of opened Employee Assistance Program cases per employee (see Exhibits 5 and 6).
- Additionally, we noted that almost one-third of the employees responding to the 1998 and about one-fourth of the employees responding to the 1999 Voice of the Employee surveys provided unfavorable responses. Specifically, 31 percent in 1998 and about 27 percent in 1999 responded unfavorably (see Exhibit 7).⁹

It should be noted, however, that almost 50 percent of the employees in the Suncoast District who responded¹⁰ to the 1998 and 1999 Voice of the Employee surveys provided favorable responses. We view this as a strong indicator that those employees are satisfied with their work environment (see Exhibit 7).

In addition, we found indicators that some improvements have been made in the area of labor management. For example, according to the District Senior Labor Relations Specialist and USPS documents, the District's participation in the grievance "blitz" program¹¹ resulted in a significant improvement in

⁸ We did not include data on opened Employee Assistance Program cases per employee for June 1997 because the data is reported by Federal fiscal quarter, and the third quarter for Fiscal Year 1997 included April and May 1997, both of which are not in our audit period. We excluded similar data for December 1998 because it was not yet available from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Federal Occupational Health, who provides the summary reports for the Employee Assistance Program statistics to the Postal Service.

⁹ We were unable to access this data for each of the facilities in the Suncoast District because, according to the USPS Voice of the Employee Program Manager, no report was prepared for the facility level in FY 1998. Only one survey was conducted for the fiscal year, because, at that point, all employees in each facility would have had an opportunity to respond to the survey at some time during the year.

¹⁰ For the FY 1998 survey, of the 5,400 surveys delivered, 3,003 employees (56 percent) responded to the survey. For the FY 1999 survey, of the 2,013 surveys delivered, 1,247 employees (62 percent) responded to the survey.

¹¹ This process is an expedited system for settling American Postal Workers Union grievances. A panel of arbitrators (usually three members) comes to the District every third week of the month for three days. Each arbitrator hears a minimum of six cases per day, with up to 100 cases heard collectively over the three-day period.

reducing the numbers of grievances at the Step 3 process level. Specifically, in FY 1998, approximately 1,000 Step 3 grievances were removed from the pending arbitration list. During the first four months of FY 1999, more than 700 cases were removed from the list.

The District has also developed a union/management communications team to enhance communications between craft employees and management.

Although the indicators outlined above cannot be the sole basis for reaching conclusions concerning the District's workplace environment, we believe that enough indicators exist to suggest there is a potential for violence. The District must assess and consider these potential violence indicators when determining the risk for violence in the workplace. Without such assessments and consideration, the District can offer no assurance that it provides a safe and healthy workplace, and is thus placing its employees at risk.

Threat Assessment
Team Goals

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* requires the team to accomplish five goals that include the following:

- identify threateners;
- assess the risk posed by the threats;
- engage in case management;
- contribute toward a safe workplace for employees; and
- contribute to the reduction of inappropriate behavior in the workplace.

We found that the Suncoast District Threat Assessment Team had only partially achieved one of the five goals outlined in the *Threat Assessment Team Guide*. Specifically, the District completes a Threat/Assault Incident Report Investigative worksheet when a threat is reported. Threateners are identified on the worksheets. Our review of these worksheets showed that the District had documented 24 threats on their Threat/Assault Incident Report Investigative worksheet. Of those 24 threats, the District referred only two to Postal Inspectors for investigation.

However, further review of the Inspection Service threat reports showed that 48 employee-related threats had been investigated

during the same period.¹² This is more than double the number of threats recorded by the District. Although the Inspection Service does not provide the District with an action plan, the District is provided a detailed investigation report to follow up with some type of action.

The District's lack of effort to consistently document and deal with threats could result in:

- possible threats of violence being unrecognized;
- an increase in the potential for violence;
- an unsafe workplace environment; and
- violations of the USPS zero tolerance policy.

According to the District's Acting Manager, Human Resources, failure to meet the remaining four goals was due to Threat Assessment Team members relying on verbal/telephone communications when conveying information about alleged threats instead of following the requirements outlined in the *Guide*.

Failure to assess the risk posed by the threats and to engage in case management contributes toward an unsafe workplace for employees and the increase in inappropriate behavior in the workplace—the opposite of the Threat Assessment Team's intention.

Threat Assessment Team Primary Tasks

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* requires that three primary tasks be accomplished when managing threats in the workplace. These consist of:

- identifying threateners, including the environmental and societal factors and contributing events;
- assessing the risk level of the situation or incident; and
- recommending a risk abatement plan for managing an identified situation or incident, with a primary focus on reduction of risk and liability.

¹² Of the 76 total threats documented in Inspection Service threat reports, there were 28 customer-related threats. The remaining 48 were employee-related.

As noted above, the District's Threat Assessment Team did not identify all threateners. Also, it did not identify the environmental¹³ and societal factors and contributing events.¹⁴

According to the Acting Manager, Human Resources, the team did not follow-up on threats made by individuals because, as previously indicated, the Threat Assessment Team members relied on verbal/telephone communication when conveying information about alleged threats instead of following the requirements outlined in the *Guide*. Not accomplishing these tasks increases the risk of violence in the workplace and any liabilities that could result from potential violence.

Threat Assessment Team Composition

The *Guide* outlines the Threat Assessment Team's composition and duties. Specifically, core membership must include the District's Human Resources Manager or designee, Senior Labor Relations Specialist, Medical Director or Occupational Health Nurse Administrator, Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst, District Manager or designee, and Lead Plant Manager or designee.

We found that the District Threat Assessment Team was comprised of the appropriate core members, and that team members were knowledgeable of their perspective roles as required by the *Guide*. However, the roster needed to be updated with names of current staff members. According to the District Manager, the roster had not been updated because he just had not gotten around to it.

Threat Assessment Team Orientation

The *Guide* also requires that all core Threat Assessment Team members and Postal Inspectors receive a 2-day orientation. This training is to make each participant aware of the USPS commitment to a strategic plan for reducing violence in the workplace, the USPS approach to the Threat Assessment Team process, and the importance of implementing a local Threat Assessment Team.

We found that only two Threat Assessment Team members had received the Threat Assessment Team orientation training—the Acting Manager, Human Resources and the Senior Labor

¹³ Some of the environmental factors to be evaluated include the condition of labor-management relations, ineffective communications, numbers of Equal Employment Opportunity complaints, grievances, and accidents, employee perceptions, and changes in management style.

¹⁴ The societal factors to be considered are community violence levels, local news coverage of violent events, and community activity of violent groups. Contributing events to be considered include a pending divorce, financial or legal problems, and perceived or pending job suspension or termination.

Relations Specialist. The Employee and Workplace Intervention Analyst told us that she had requested the training, but was denied. Although other team members attended a 2-day Threat Assessment Team course held in July 1998, the Acting Manager, Human Resources realized that this training could not be substituted for the orientation training. This training was not limited to the Threat Assessment Team members, but was offered to top officials throughout the Suncoast District.

Threat Assessment
Team Process

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* requires that the District's Threat Assessment Team meet at least quarterly to review cases and educate team members. The *Guide* states that during these meetings, the team will conduct case management and determine what is to be done, by whom, when, the time frame for completion, and the time frame for reporting updates. In addition, it provides that monitoring of environmental factors at identified work sites be discussed. This information is to help the team better understand a pattern of behavior and/or events.

The *Guide* also requires that minutes of the meetings are kept, and that they include risk assessment findings on each case discussed, risk priority ratings assigned, and risk abatement actions.

According to the Acting Manager, Human Resources, the team did not meet quarterly, and thus the activities outlined above were not conducted.

He also told us that there is no follow-up to threats made by individuals. However, he said that if an employee becomes a repeat threatener, the employee would receive disciplinary action.

Incident Response

The District's Threat Assessment Team did not follow seven of the eight required steps when responding to an incident or situation. The *Guide* provides that the team: (1) notify the appropriate people; (2) make assignments; (3) collect information; (4) make a background inquiry; (5) review and analyze the case; (6) make a final assessment; (7) develop a risk abatement plan; and (8) follow up.

Although the District notified the appropriate people, which is the first step in the process, the District did not always complete the Threat/Assault Incident Report Investigative worksheet. According to the Lead Plant Manager, in some cases, the situation is resolved locally by separating the employees and by conducting mediation with union representatives. In these situations a worksheet is not completed and the situation does not necessarily require follow-up.

Failure to document and follow up on violent incidents in the workplace contributes to the likelihood for future violence in the workplace.

Measurement of
Threat Assessment
Team Performance

The District's Threat Assessment Team did not establish performance measures as required by the *Guide*. Performance measures help reduce the risk of violence in the workplace because they provide information that enables management to implement violence prevention programs based on the needs of the District. These measures include surveys, the compilation of information concerning numbers and types of threats and assaults, a tracking system, and a post-incident analysis of each violent incident. Without this information, the District cannot know how effective it has been in addressing violence-in-the-workplace issues.

Violence Awareness
Training

The *Threat Assessment Team Guide* states that every manager and supervisor should complete eight hours of workplace violence awareness program training. Additionally, each should complete four hours of follow-up training on such topics as defusing a difficult situation, providing effective supervision, managing change, managing anger, managing troubled employees, and motivating employees. Further, the *Guide* states that it is equally important that all employees be made aware of the existence of their local Threat Assessment Team and the local systems and processes put in place to support zero tolerance.

The workplace violence awareness training conducted for Suncoast District has consisted of:

- a condensed four-hour workplace violence awareness training course primarily for managers and supervisors;
- a one-hour video, or portions thereof, available to all employees;

- team training of Threat Assessment and Crisis Management Team members for managers and supervisors on the teams;
- an introduction to workplace violence awareness for new employees;¹⁵
- stand-up sessions on a recurring basis for all employees at the District's facilities; and
- television displays concerning workplace violence, which are shown at the facilities to be viewed by all employees.

The workplace violence awareness training conducted for District managers and supervisors during our audit period did not meet the *Threat Assessment Team Guide* criteria. The District did not conduct the eight-hour workplace violence awareness course as required by the *Guide*. It also did not conduct the condensed workplace violence awareness course it had used in FY 1996. We found that of the 981 managers and supervisors assigned to the District during our audit period,¹⁶ approximately 140 attended one of the one-hour video sessions, or portions thereof, during the period. Further, we determined that during this period, of the 981 managers and supervisors, approximately 190 (about 19 percent) attended the four-hour follow-up training required by the *Guide*.

In a previous OIG audit,¹⁷ USPS management agreed to mandate violence awareness training for all craft employees, supervisors, and managers. We found that workplace violence awareness training has not been provided to all craft employees in the Suncoast District. Out of over 12,000¹⁸ craft employees assigned to the District during our audit period, we determined that only about 270 (around two percent) attended the one-hour video sessions or portions thereof, and only about 40 attended one of the four-hour follow-up training courses.

¹⁵ This number is approximate because the data provided on an additional 40 former employees who had attended this training during this period did not identify the former employees by position.

¹⁶ Our analysis did not include attendance at workplace violence awareness training programs by 204b's (acting supervisors). According to the Acting Manager, Human Resources, these acting supervisors may serve in such a capacity for less than a day, and therefore no list is maintained for those serving in that capacity. He stated that the District attempts to send acting supervisors to such training if they are serving in such positions when the training is conducted.

¹⁷ "U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General, Violence Prevention Policies and Procedures, Milwaukee District Compliance," September 30, 1999, LM-AR-98-002.

¹⁸ This is the average craft employee population during our audit period.

In total, we determined that during our audit period, approximately 410 employees, or about three percent, of over 13,000 total District employees attended one of the one-hour video training sessions (or portions thereof), and approximately 230, or about two percent, attended four-hour follow-up courses.

However, we did note that the District had conducted more extensive workplace violence awareness training prior to our audit period. In FY 1996, the District provided a condensed four-hour version of the eight-hour workplace violence awareness training course required by the *Guide*. Of the 981 managers and supervisors assigned to the District during our audit period, we determined that approximately 720 (73 percent)¹⁹ attended this condensed four-hour course. We also noted that from the beginning of FY 1996 to the beginning of our audit period, approximately 760 (77 percent) of the managers and supervisors attended four-hour follow-up courses.²⁰

We determined that for the same period, approximately 90 craft employees attended the condensed four-hour workplace violence awareness course²¹ and approximately 20 attended one of the four-hour follow-up courses.²²

The *Guide* states that it is equally important that all employees be made aware of the existence of their local Threat Assessment Team and the local systems put in place to support zero tolerance. We found that the District had informed employees about local systems and processes put in place to support zero tolerance, such as procedures for reporting threats. It had not, however, informed all employees about the existence of the Threat Assessment Team. The Senior Training Specialist stated that while zero tolerance, workplace violence awareness, and the reporting of threats had been covered during employee orientations, the existence of the Threat Assessment Team was not specifically discussed.

¹⁹ These numbers are approximate because the data provided on approximately 35 former employees who had attended this training during this period did not identify the former employees by position.

²⁰ This number is approximate because the data provided on an additional 40 former employees who had attended this training during this period did not identify the former employees by position.

²¹ See Footnote 15.

²² See Footnote 16.

The Senior Training Specialist stated that violence awareness training had not been conducted for all employees, including craft employees, and that the District had only provided limited workplace violence awareness training because it had not received a mandate from USPS Headquarters requiring further training.

Implementation of Crisis Management Plan

A Crisis Management Plan is designed to provide advance preparation guidelines for the basic management of incidents of workplace violence. The *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace*, Publication 107, May 1997, provides a model plan that outlines the minimum essential procedures to be followed in the event of a violent crisis.

While the District had established a Crisis Management Team and a team notification process, we found that the District had not complied with the remaining policies and procedures required by Publication 107. Specifically, it had not:

- developed an up-to-date and complete team member assignment list;
- assigned roles and responsibilities to individual team members;
- developed a backup plan to obtain support from Headquarters, the Southeast Area, and a nearby Crisis Management Team;
- established and equipped a Crisis Command Center and alternate command site;
- ensured receipt of the local, customized crisis management plans at all Suncoast District facilities; and
- provided required training for Crisis Management Team members.

The District's Acting Manager, Human Resources, who serves as the Crisis Management Team leader, and Crisis Manager, provided a variety of reasons why the Crisis Management Plan had not been implemented. For example, he said that he was reluctant to appoint key members prior to a crisis because members may not be able to recall specific duties when responding to the crisis. He also told us that he could provide specific instructions to the team members once a

crisis occurred. He had not designated or equipped a Crisis Command Center because he believed it should be located near the crisis. He also said that other priorities had prevented the development of the backup plan.

Crisis Management Team Member Assignments

The Crisis Management Plan requires that the districts assign a minimum of eight key team members and alternates to specific roles and responsibilities as outlined in the plan.

We found that the Suncoast District did not have an up-to-date and complete team member assignment list, including alternates, in its crisis management plan. Additionally, the District had not assigned roles and responsibilities to each of the required team members. A District official told us that he had assigned the task of updating the team member assignment list, but that the task had not been completed.

The lack of an up-to-date and complete team member assignment list, with fully assigned roles and responsibilities for each required team member, could result in the District not achieving mandatory preparedness and critical tasks not being accomplished in the event of a crisis.

Backup Crisis Management Plan For External Support

Publication 107 recognizes that a crisis may traumatize Crisis Management Team members and other involved personnel. It states that a backup plan for external support (Headquarters, Area, and nearby Crisis Management Team) should be provided to carry out their duties and responsibilities, if necessary. We determined that the Suncoast District did not have a backup crisis management plan. A District official told us that a backup plan for external support had not been developed due to other priorities.

We believe that without such a plan, the Crisis Management Team may not be able to fulfill their duties and responsibilities in the event of a crisis.

Establishing and Equipping a Crisis Command Center and Alternate Command Sites

The Plan requires that a crisis command center be pre-selected and equipped in preparation for efficiently managing a crisis. Further, it states that consideration must also be given to establishing an alternate command site in case the designated command center cannot be accessed.

We determined that the District had not established a Crisis Command Center and an alternate command site. A District official told us that he had not done so because, in his opinion, the Crisis Management Team must be flexible, and able to move near the site of the incident, which may be hours away from District Headquarters.

The lack of a designated and properly equipped Crisis Command Center and alternate command site may impair the ability of the Crisis Management Team to quickly mobilize and perform assigned Crisis Management Team duties. It may also result in confusion at the incident site and other locations regarding items such as the status of the Crisis Management Team support, chain of command, and media-related issues.

Crisis Management Plans Available at Facilities

The Crisis Management Plan requires that the District leadership ensure that local, customized Crisis Management Plans are made available to each facility. Additionally, it is intended that copies be provided to other non-district facilities, including area offices and Headquarters-related units.

We project that about half (47 percent) of the 217 facilities have a copy of the District's Crisis Management Plan.²³ Officials at some of the District facilities gave various reasons for not having a Crisis Management Plan on hand, such as they did not know there was a requirement for such plans, and that they could not locate the plans. Appendix C presents the sample results.

If Crisis Management Plans are not on-site at the facilities, management may be unable to take the appropriate action in the event of a crisis.

Crisis Management Training and Preparedness Meetings

Crisis management training involves initial Crisis Management Team training and crisis simulation. The initial training should cover the plan, employee issues, communications, media relations, and maintenance of public image. The training is required within six months of the plan's implementation. Regular crisis preparedness meetings should be held thereafter.

²³ We conducted a random sample review of 60 of 217 facilities in Suncoast District. The 217 facilities included all post offices, stations, branches and postal stores. The processing and distribution centers are not included in the projection.

Crisis simulation is designed to verify the efficiency and effectiveness of the plan. Each District is urged to validate the plan by conducting a full simulation and either an electronic or notification simulation at least annually.

According to a District official, the District: (1) was not aware of whether it had conducted required initial Crisis Management Team training, and (2) had not conducted regular preparedness meetings and crisis simulation. Without this training, the team is unprepared to mobilize and respond effectively to an actual crisis.

In addition, an untrained team could inadvertently contribute to:

- injury or loss of life;
- loss or destruction of mail or other property;
- delay or interruption of mail operations;
- litigation resulting from damages relating to such inefficiencies; and
- damage of the USPS public image.

Conclusion

On the basis of our audit, we believe that a potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District facilities because District officials have not implemented effective violence-prevention and response programs as required by USPS policies and procedures. The District's lack of attention to violence prevention efforts could adversely affect the workplace climate and USPS operations. Violence increases stress, inflicts emotional wounds, and lowers employee morale. Organizationally, it diminishes credibility, decreases productivity, creates work-specific tension, and damages property.

Recommendations

The Vice President, Southeast Area Operations, should immediately require that:

1. The District and the Threat Assessment Team fully implement the USPS policies and procedures regarding violence in the workplace, paying particular attention to the *Threat Assessment Team Guide*.

2. The District's Zero Tolerance Policy be revised to mirror the USPS Zero Tolerance Policy. This revised policy must be communicated to all employees and enforced consistently.
3. Security Control Officers conduct physical security reviews of all District facilities as required by the *Administrative Support Manual*.
4. Attendance at violence awareness training for all craft employees, supervisors, and managers be mandatory.
5. The District and the Crisis Management Team fully implement the policies and procedures outlined in the *Crisis Management Plan for Incidents of Violence in the Workplace*.
6. A review be conducted of the events surrounding the two threats made by employees, as outlined in this report. The purpose of the review is to determine that the employees involved do not pose a potential threat to the workplace and other employees.
7. District management review the responses to all threat incidents made to the Threat Assessment Team to ensure that future recommendations made by Threat Assessment Team members are acted upon immediately.

**Management's
Response**

The Area Vice President for the Southeast Area did not agree with the OIG conclusion that the potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District facilities because District officials have not implemented effective violence prevention and response programs. He stated, "There is no valid nexus between the two to justify this conclusion." He agreed, however, that limited violence prevention efforts could adversely affect workplace climate and, therefore, violence prevention and response programs require improvement.

The Vice President did not agree there was a mandatory requirement for attendance at violence awareness training for all craft employees, supervisors, and managers. He stated there may be a misinterpretation of Publication 108 and the previous OIG audit referenced in the draft report regarding mandatory violence awareness training. He said that Publication 108 permissively states, "Supervisors . . . and

managers *should be required* to take 8 hours Workplace Violence Awareness Program Training. . . .” He added that Publication 108 does not reference or mandate training for craft employees. He acknowledged that in the previous OIG audit, management agreed to develop and distribute appropriate craft awareness training, but to his knowledge, there was no national management agreement to provide 8 hours of workplace violence awareness training to all craft employees.

The Southeast Area Vice President stated the Area’s commitment to the appropriate implementation of the policies and procedures regarding violence prevention and facility security reviews. He stated that the Area will assure that adequate training to supervisors, managers, and craft employees regarding violence awareness prevention is provided and that appropriate zero tolerance policies are in effect.

The Suncoast District Manager responded to all of the OIG recommendations and told us that significant action has been taken to implement the recommendations.

We have summarized management’s responses in the report and included the full text of the comments in Appendices D, E, and F.

Evaluation of Management’s Response

Publication 108 states that a viable Workplace Violence Prevention program is the first step in helping to ensure a violence free workplace. It further states that “the most effective way to respond to the growing problem of workplace violence is to develop strategies to prevent it.” In this regard, we believe there is a direct link between the existence of a violence prevention program and the potential for violence.

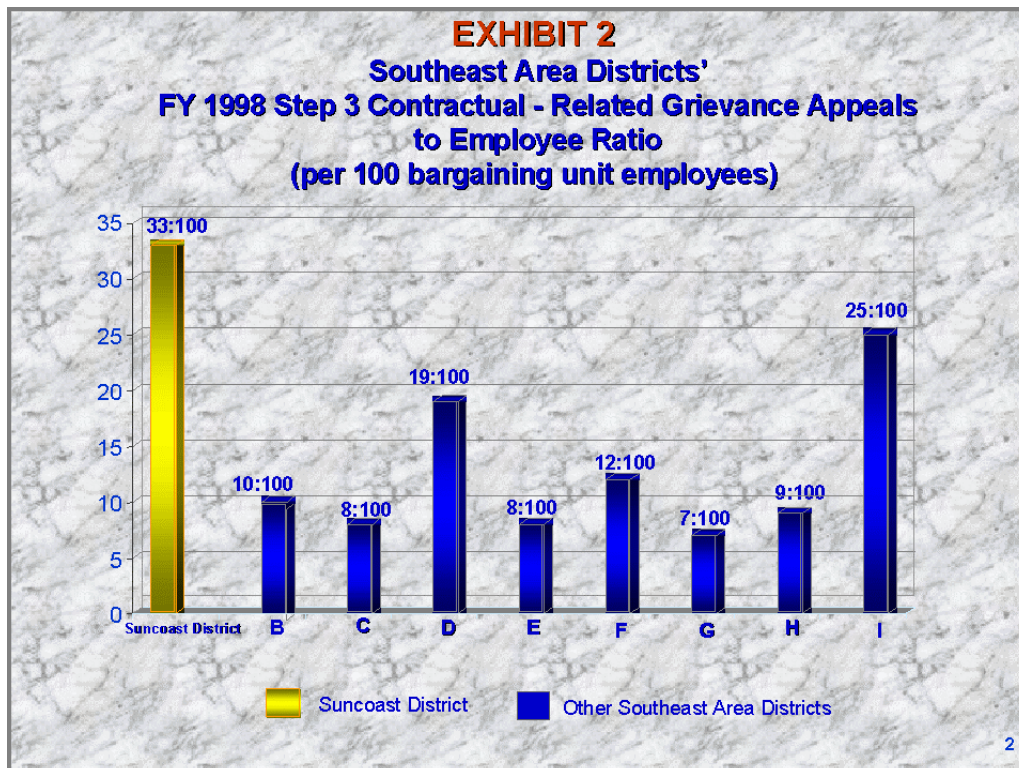
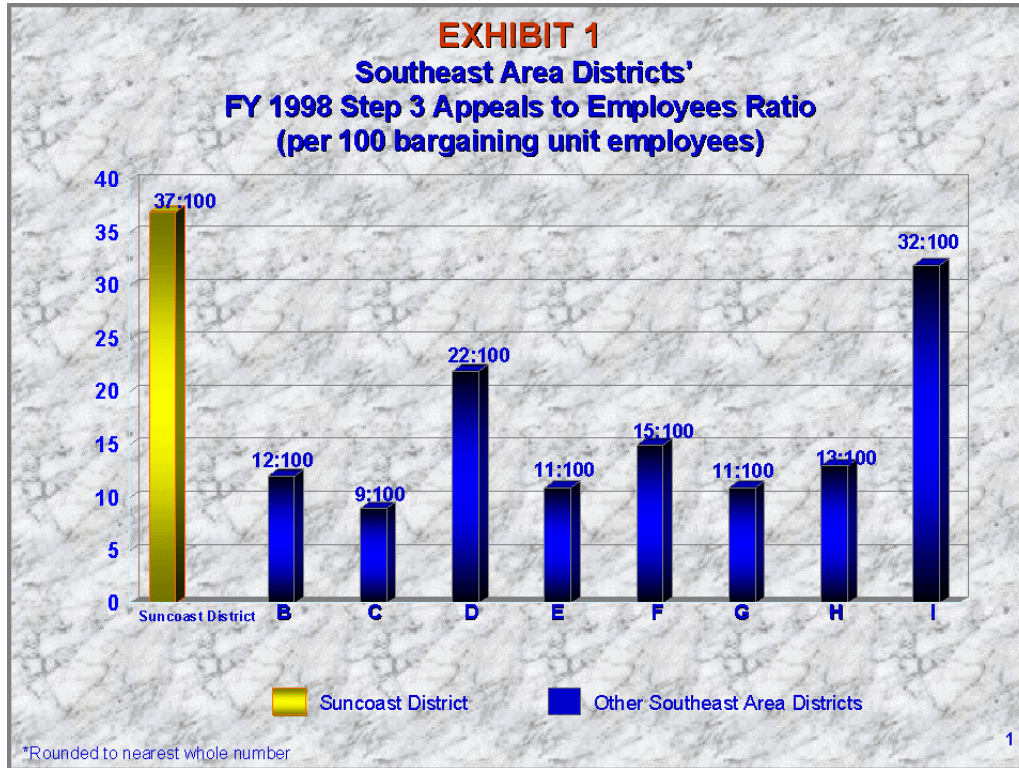
Our previous OIG audit was directed to the Senior Vice President, Labor Relations; Vice President, Human Resources; and then Acting Vice President, Midwest Area Operations and recommended that they mandate attendance at violence awareness training for “all craft employee, supervisors, and managers.” This recommendation was based on the fact that craft employees in Milwaukee were not offered violence awareness training, and supervisors were not being required to attend training that was available.

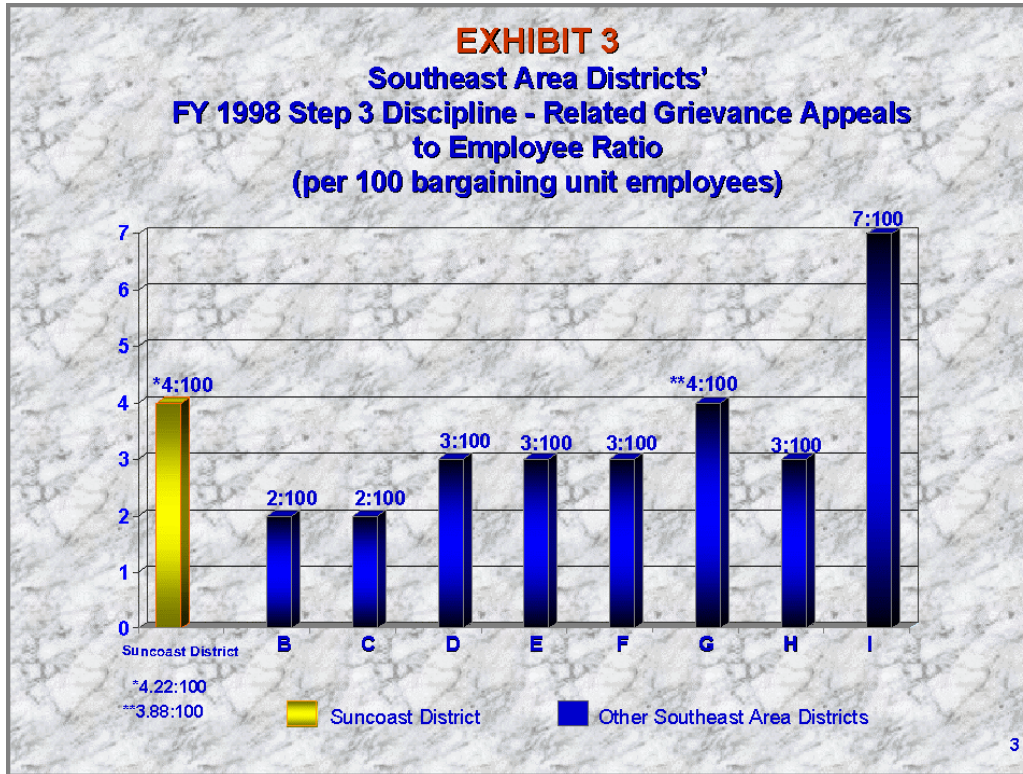
The USPS response to the recommendation in our earlier audit for mandatory violence awareness training was that “Manager and supervisor attendance will be mandated at future violence awareness training. The initial draft of the craft training is expected to be completed in mid-October [1998], with the necessary coordination, development, and deployment to follow.”

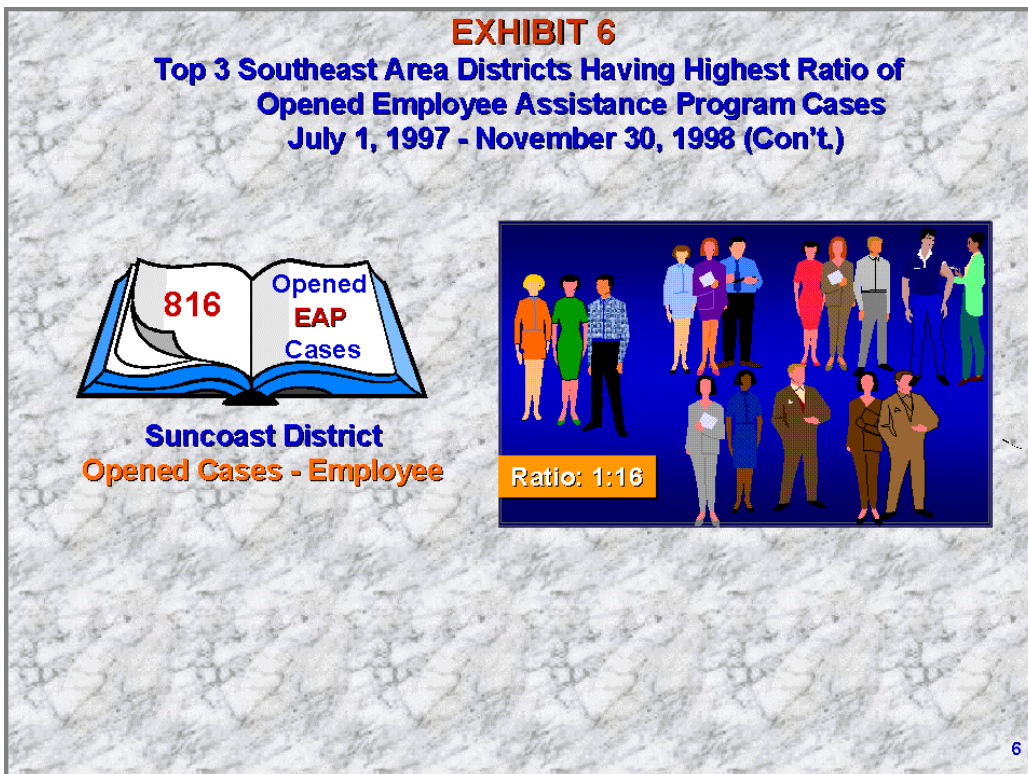
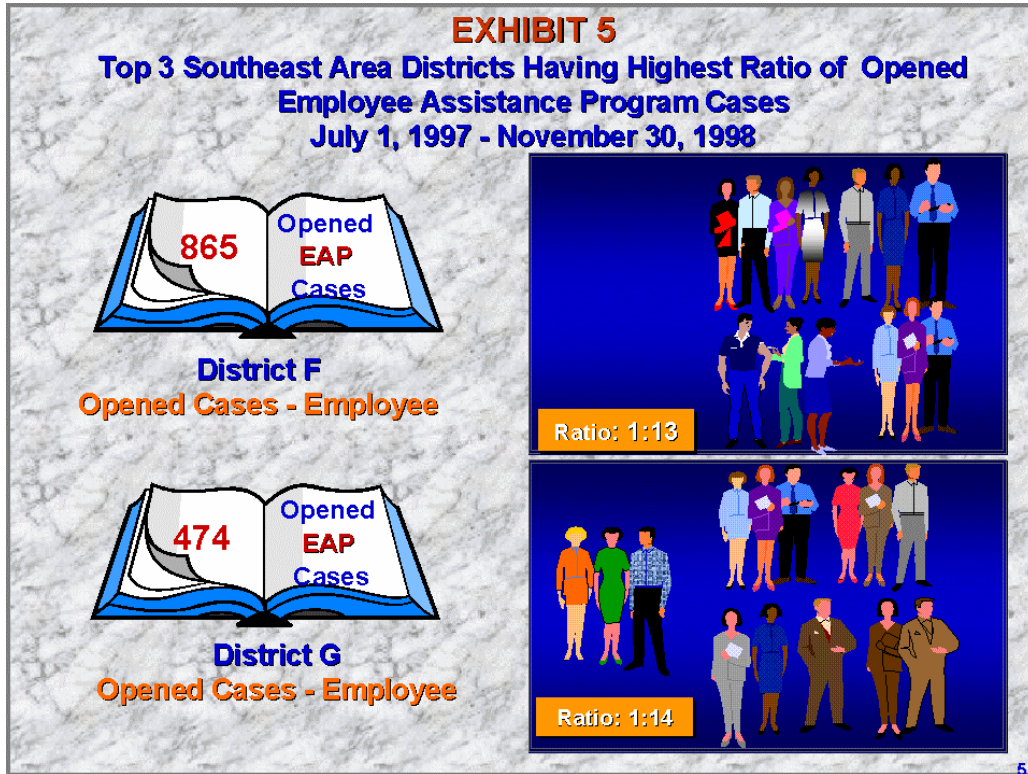
It is apparent that the recommendation made in our earlier report was interpreted by the Southeast Area Vice President , to apply to the Milwaukee location only. In an interview with a USPS Human Relations Specialist,²⁴ we confirmed that the mandatory craft training was implemented in the Milwaukee District only. However, he advised us that mandatory training is “tentatively being approved” for implementation nationwide. We will address this issue in an upcoming report on our review of the Threat Assessment Team process in the Arkansas District, Southeast Area.

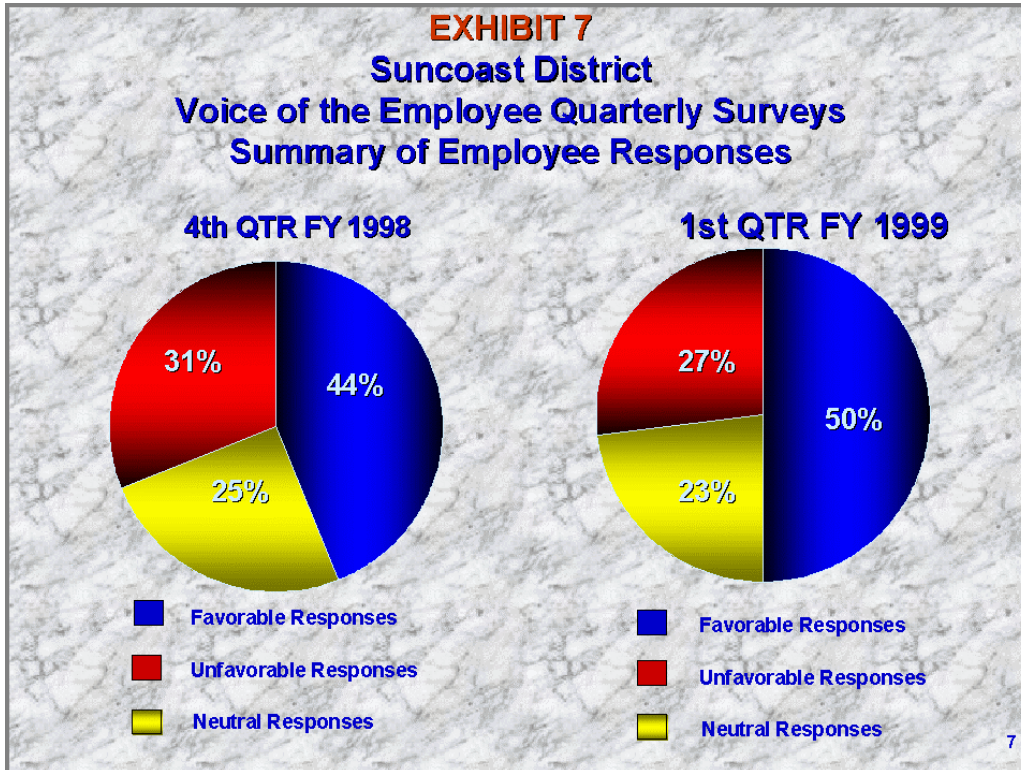
Although the Vice President did not agree with our overall finding, we believe that the District’s planned or implemented actions are responsive and address the issues identified in this report.

²⁴ This Human Relations Specialist was responsible for responding to the earlier OIG recommendation regarding the mandatory training for craft employees.









STATISTICAL SAMPLING AND PROJECTIONS

Purpose of the Sampling

One of the objectives of this audit was to assess Suncoast District's implementation of USPS policy regarding physical security reviews and crisis management plans. In support of this objective, the audit team employed a simple random attribute sample design that allows statistical projection of responses from individual facilities within the Suncoast District.

Definition of the Audit Universe

The audit universe consisted of 217 facilities, post offices, stations, branches, and postal stores. (Processing and Distribution Centers are not included.) The Suncoast District management was the source of the universe data.

Sample Design and Modifications

The audit used a simple random sample design. Sixty facilities were randomly selected for review, to provide a one-sided 95% confidence interval with a 5 percent precision, based on auditor expectations of a high level of non-compliance.

Two attributes projected in this audit, however, exhibited higher levels of compliance than was originally expected, producing less precision than was planned in the original sample design.

Statistical Projections of the Sample Data

All attributes are projected to a universe of 217 facilities. No differences in universe were provided for FY 1997 versus FY 1998.

Attribute 1: Physical Security Review Conducted In FY 1997.

Based on projection of the sample results, we are 95 percent confident that no more than 9 percent of the Suncoast district facilities conducted a physical security review in FY 1997. The unbiased point estimate is 5 percent, or 11 facilities.

Attribute 2: Physical Security Review Conducted In FY 1998.

Based on projection of the sample results, we are 95 percent confident that no more than 38 percent of the Suncoast district facilities conducted a physical security review in FY 1998. The unbiased point estimate is 30 percent, or 65 facilities.

Attribute 3: Crisis Management Plan Received From District Management.

Based on projection of the sample results, we are 95 percent confident that no more than 56 percent of the Suncoast district facilities have a copy of the district crisis management plan. The unbiased point estimate is 47 percent, or 102 facilities.

**PHYSICAL SECURITY REVIEW STATUS
SUNCOAST DISTRICT
FISCAL YEARS 1997 AND 1998**

ITEM NUMBER	RANDOM SAMPLE #	LOCATION	ZIP	PHYSICAL SECURITY REVIEW				
				CONDUCTED FY 97	DATE	CONDUCTED FY 98	DATE	
1	163	Sarasota	34230		NO	NA	NO	N/A
2	78	Immokalee	34142		NO	N/A	YES	10/16/97
3	104	Lutz	33548		NO	NA	NO	NA
4	50	Dunedin	34698		NO	NA	NO	NA
5	79	Indian Rocks Bch	33785		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
6	44	Crystal Beach	34681		NO	NA	NO	NA
7	134	Plant City	33566		NO	NA	NO	NA
8	202	Thonotosassa	33592		NO	NA	NO	NA
9	161	San Antonio	33576		NO	NA	NO	NA
10	138	Main PO Port Richey	34668		NO	NA	YES	8/18/98
11	198	Ybor City Station	33605		NO	NA	NO	NA
12	119	Nokomis	34275		NO	N/A	YES	9/10/98
13	215	Florence Villa Station	33881		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
14	69	Tice Branch	33905	YES		9/5/97	NO	N/A
15	148	Saint Leo	33574		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
16	131	Pineland	33945		NO	N/A	YES	9/18/97, 4/8/98
17	207	North Port Branch	34287		NO	N/A	YES	8/17/98
18	191	Seminole Station	33603		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
19	20	57th Ave Branch	34207		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
20	84	Lacoochee	33537		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
21	64	Downtown Stat. Ft Myers	33901		NO	N/A	YES	8/13/98
22	108	Myakka City	34251		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
23	24	Brandon	33511		NO	N/A	YES	8/21/98
24	56	Englewood	34295		NO	N/A	YES	9/11/98
25	48	Dover	33527		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
26	89	Lake Wales	33853		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
27	10	Bartow	33830		NO	N/A	YES	8/28/98
28	71	Fort Ogden	34267		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
29	188	Port Tampa Station	33616		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
30	149	Saint Petersburg	33730		NO	N/A	YES	3/11/98
31	65	Iona Carrier Annex	33908		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
32	38	High Point Branch	33762		NO	N/A	YES	8/28/98
33	59	Felda	33930		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
34	212	Wimauma	33598		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
35	42	Copeland	34137	YES		2/7/97; 5/16/97; 8/20/97	YES	12/5/97; 2/19/98; 7/31/98
36	60	Fort Meade	33841	YES		1/31/97	YES	2/28/98
37	32	Center Hill	33514		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
38	200	Holiday Branch	34690		NO	N/A	YES	** Undated
39	41	Coleman	33521		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
40	111	East Naples Carrier Annex	34104		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
41	96	Largo	33770		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
42	7	Avon Park	33825		NO	N/A	YES	** 8/98
43	217	Zolfo Springs	33890		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
44	133	Placida	33946		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
45	140	Murdoch Branch	33948		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
46	33	Chokoloskee	34138		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
47	28	Plaza Branch	34606		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
48	98	Laurel	34272		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
49	126	Ozona	34660		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
50	159	St. Pete Beach Branch	33706		NO	N/A	YES	** 8/98
51	105	Mango	33550		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
52	130	Parrish	34219		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
53	154	Gulf Winds Station	33711		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
54	47	Davenport	33836		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
55	137	Port Richey	34668		NO	N/A	YES	8/18/98
56	153	Gateway Mall Station	33703		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
57	99	Lehigh Acres	33936		NO	N/A	YES	9/1/98
58	14	Bonita Springs	34135		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
59	83	Labelle	33935		NO	N/A	NO	N/A
60	178	Forest Hills Annex	33613		NO	N/A	NO	N/A

** Specific Date Unknown

**CRISIS MANAGEMENT PLAN STATUS
SUNCOAST DISTRICT
As of April 12, 1999**

ITEM NUMBER	RANDOM SAMPLE #	LOCATION	ZIP	EVIDENCE OF CMP PROVIDED BY USPS	
				YES	NO
1	163	Sarasota	34230		NO
2	78	Immokalee	34142	YES	
3	104	Lutz	33548	YES	
4	50	Dunedin	34698		NO
5	79	Indian Rocks Bch	33785	YES	
6	44	Crystal Beach	34681		NO
7	134	Plant City	33566	YES	
8	202	Thonotosassa	33592		NO
9	161	San Antonio	33576	YES	
10	138	Main PO Port Richey	34668	YES	
11	198	Ybor City Station	33605	YES	
12	119	Nokomis	34275	YES	
13	215	Florence Villa Station	33881		NO
14	69	Tice Branch	33905	YES	
15	148	Saint Leo	33574	YES	
16	131	Pineland	33945	YES	
17	207	North Port Branch	34287		NO
18	191	Seminole Station	33603		NO
19	20	57th Ave Branch	34207		NO
20	84	Lacoochee	33537		NO
21	64	Downtown Stat, Ft Myers	33901		NO
22	108	Myakka City	34251		NO
23	24	Brandon	33511	YES	
24	56	Englewood	34295	YES	
25	48	Dover	33527	YES	
26	89	Lake Wales	33853		NO
27	10	Bartow	33830	YES	
28	71	Fort Ogden	34267		NO
29	188	Port Tampa Station	33616	YES	
30	149	Saint Petersburg	33730	YES	
31	65	Iona Carrier Annex	33908		NO
32	38	High Point Branch	33762	YES	
33	59	Felda	33930		NO
34	212	Wimauma	33598	YES	
35	42	Copeland	34137		NO
36	60	Fort Meade	33841		NO
37	32	Center Hill	33514	YES	
38	200	Holiday Branch	34690	YES	
39	41	Coleman	33521	YES	
40	111	East Naples Carrier Annex	34104		NO
41	96	Largo	33770	YES	
42	7	Avon Park	33825		NO
43	217	Zolfo Springs	33890		NO
44	133	Placida	33946		NO
45	140	Murdoch Branch	33948		NO
46	33	Chokoloskee	34138	YES	
47	28	Plaza Branch	34606		NO
48	98	Laurel	34272		NO
49	126	Ozona	34660		NO
50	159	St. Pete Beach Branch	33706	YES	
51	105	Mango	33550		NO
52	130	Parrish	34219	YES	
53	154	Gulf Winds Station	33711		NO
54	47	Davenport	33836		NO
55	137	Port Richey	34668		NO
56	153	Gateway Mall Station	33703		NO
57	99	Lehigh Acres	33936	YES	
58	14	Bonita Springs	34135		NO
59	83	Labelle	33935	YES	
60	178	Forest Hills Annex	33613		NO

**Review of the Violence Prevention Program in the Suncoast District and the
Impact on Workplace Climate and Operations**

ER-AR-99-002

DISTRICT MANAGER, CUSTOMER SERVICE & SALES
SUNCOAST DISTRICT



DATE: July 12, 1999
REF: SED:Gcondley:dr:oirpt:33607-7140
SUBJECT: Suncoast District – Violence Prevention Program

TO: BILLY SAULS
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
1735 N LYNN STREET
ARLINGTON VA 22209-2020

The June 16, 1999 report has been reviewed and the following responses to your specific concerns are addressed below.

- The District's Threat Assessment Team has been fully staffed and two meetings have occurred since the audit. The Threat Assessment process, outlined in an eight-page narrative, was distributed to all post offices and plants during May 1999. The narrative was created from the Threat Assessment Team Guide. Additionally, laminated cards have been distributed to each office/plant which outlines the 20 item Threat Assessment Team Guide Checklist for Threats and Assaults.
- The District's Zero Tolerance Policy was reissued during May 1999. The revision mirrors the USPS Zero Tolerance Policy that defines and clarifies when a threat, assault or other acts of workplace violence have occurred. The policy was read in an office wide stand up talk and then posted in each installation. All potential or actual threats are reported to the Manager, Human Resources by phone and the Threat/Assault Incident Report Investigative Worksheet is faxed to his office. An assessment is made and the appropriate action is taken. Additionally, we are working on a process that will reconcile the difference between Postal Inspection threats/incidents and reported threats/incidents received by the Manager, Human Resources.
- The District's Security Control Officer has completed 94 surveys for facilities with over 26 employees so far this fiscal year, with the remaining eight facilities to be completed by the end of Quarter I, FY 2000. In addition to the mandated offices, we have decided to require the remaining smaller offices to complete the security survey by the end of Quarter II of FY 2000. In a related area, three security videos that address city/rural delivery employees, all other craft employees and the supervisory staff are being duplicated and will be distributed to each installation by July 20, 1999. This information will continue to enhance our employees' knowledge concerning security issues. The following projects to enhance security have been completed in the Suncoast District:

2203 N LOIS AVE STE 1001
TAMPA FL 33607-7101
(813) 354-6099
FAX: (813) 877-8656

Install cameras	\$ 14,385.00	Tampa P&DC
Install cameras	10,000.00	Brooksville M.O.
Install cameras & monitor	7,660.00	Punta Gorda – TCA
Install motorized security gate	50,000.00	St. Petersburg M.O.
Install security cameras	107,903.50	St. Petersburg M.O.
Install card access system	28,945.14	Tampa Suncoast District
Install security fence	13,209.76	Nokomis
Install security gate	26,308.20	St. Pete – S. Annex
Install cameras	4,372.28	Bradenton – Palma Sola
Install cameras	13,500.00	Ft. Myers
Install access control system	10,000.00	St. Petersburg-Northside
Install access control system	10,000.00	St. Petersburg-Gulfwinds
Upgrade security system	13,300.00	Tampa GMF
Install cameras	9,130.00	Tampa GMF
TOTAL		
\$318,713.88		

- The Workplace Violence Awareness (WVA) program training is scheduled in Quarters I and II of FY 2000 for the 246 EAS employees who have not received it. As outlined in the audit, craft employees have received some video information concerning WVA. Beginning with accounting period 12/99, nine separate stand-up talks, spread over the next 12 months, will be provided to each post office and plant. The subjects will be focused on violence in the workplace, its prevention and a reminder that the district has a Threat Assessment Team (TAT) in place to assist and monitor such issues. Additionally, it should be noted that workplace violence information and our policy of zero tolerance are an ongoing part of new employee general orientation.
- The District's Crisis Management Team has reconvened and has updated the Crisis Management Plan (CMP). The plan was redistributed in July 1999 to all offices and plants. The team has established a command center and an alternate site. Supplies have been purchased or procured to support the team's efforts. A crisis simulation exercise is scheduled for July 27, 1999 whereby a critique of the team's effectiveness will be assessed by a group of trained crisis simulation personnel. Additionally, Crisis Management Plan overview training for the supervisors and managers in the post offices and plants is scheduled to begin August 1999. The training will provide the supervisors with a better understanding of how the CMP is utilized.
- The two threats outlined in the audit were not both specifically identified by the auditors. However, the Employee Workplace Intervention Analyst remembers one of the incidents that the IG's office did discuss with her. The person involved was sent for EAP counseling and continued in the program. He is doing much better and no further services were required. We are unable to recall the second incident.
- A review of all responses to threats/incidents made to the Threat Assessment Team is being documented on a worksheet. This allows the team to track types and numbers of incidents. Also, the local Inspection Service is providing a copy of their worksheet which also provides the number of incidents reported. Depending on the seriousness of the incident, a post incident analysis will occur to attain a better understanding of how the TAT is functioning. Additionally, the TAT survey will be sent to all sites where the TAT was activated. This information will be used as a learning tool for the team.

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The above summaries of the seven major issues outlined by the audit will be continually monitored and reviewed by the Suncoast District staff. Based on the information provided in the previous paragraphs, we feel that we have implemented effective violence prevention strategies. The subsequent response programs will assist us in continuing to monitor the workplace environment for all employees.



Michael P. Jordan

BOB DAVIS
VICE PRESIDENT, AREA OPERATIONS
SOUTHEAST AREA



July 15, 1999

MEMORANDUM FOR: Mr. Billy Sauls
Assistant Inspector General for Employee
Office of Inspector General
1735 N. Lynn Street
Arlington, VA 22209-2020

SUBJECT: Review of Violence Prevention Program – Suncoast District

This is a response to the draft report concerning the Review of the Violence Prevention Program in the Suncoast District dated June 16, 1999, and received at the Area Office on June 29, 1999.

Since this was a District review and not an Areawide review, the District Manager, Suncoast District, will more appropriately provide the specific management response to the recommendations under separate cover. However, the draft report requires general management response from the Area level as well.

The Southeast Area strongly disagrees with the team's conclusion that the potential for violence exists in the Suncoast District because District officials have not implemented effective violence prevention and response programs. There is no valid nexus between the two to justify this conclusion. The Area agrees that limited violence prevention efforts could adversely affect workplace climate, as the draft report notes. Therefore, these prevention and response programs require improvement. However, that observation in no way forms a basis for the potential for violence conclusion.

Regarding the Workplace Violence Prevention Training, it appears that there may be a misinterpretation of Publication 108 and the previous OIG audit referenced in the draft report. Publication 108 does not mandate workplace violence awareness training for managers and supervisors. Rather, Publication 108 permissively states, "Supervisors (including those in 204B status) and managers *should be required* to take 8 hours Workplace Violence Awareness Program Training...". In addition, Publication 108 does not reference or mandate workplace violence awareness training for craft employees. Instead, the report references a prior OIG audit as a basis for requiring training for craft employees. In that audit, there was a management agreement to develop and distribute appropriate craft awareness training. To my knowledge, there was no national management agreement to provide 8 hours of workplace violence awareness training to all craft employees.


In closing, the Southeast Area is committed to the appropriate implementation of the policies & procedures regarding threat assessment, crisis management, and facility security reviews. In addition, the Area will assure that adequate training to supervisors, managers, and craft employees regarding violence awareness prevention is provided and that appropriate zero tolerance policies are in effect.

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Mr. Billy Sauls

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If you require any additional information, please contact Karen Borowski, Manager, Human Resources, at
901-747-7200.


Bob Davis

cc: Mike Jordan, DM, Suncoast
Yvonne Maguire, VP, Human Resources, HQs
Suzanne Milton, Mgr., Workplace Environment Improvement, HQs
Karen A. Borowski, Mgr., Human Resources, SEAO

Review of the Violence Prevention Program in the Suncoast District and the
Impact on Workplace Climate and Operations

ER-AR-99-002

DISTRICT MANAGER, CUSTOMER SERVICE & SALES
SUNCOAST DISTRICT



DATE: July 29, 1999

SUBJECT: Threat Assessment

TO: BILLY SAULS
OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL
1735 N LYNN ST
ARLINGTON VA 22209-2202

On July 28, 1999 we were sent a document that clarified the second threat and who were involved. The Employee Workplace Intervention Analyst (EWIA) provided the following update.

The employee is currently not a threat. The EWIA spoke to the postmaster who stated he has gained an awareness re: his behavior. The employee was referred to EAP and attended several sessions. The EAP counselor followed up by telephone several times after the employee had finished counseling. Also, the EAP counselor has talked to the employee on two occasions when presenting Health awareness talks on such topics as, "How to Manage Anger." The employee is being managed properly.

If you require any further clarification concerning this specific issues, please do not hesitate to contact us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. P. Jordan".

Michael P. Jordan

cc: K. Borowski, Area Manager, HR
G. Condley, Mgr., HR

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