Hostile Termination Preparedness

Even if the news is expected, it can be emotional for an employee to learn their position is being eliminated. While the majority of terminated employees never cause a problem, some may harbor resentment that might manifest in a way that could pose a risk to the organization. It's important to have a security protocol in place and a plan to mitigate any risk that may follow the termination.

Here's a checklist of criteria to consider as you assess your level of preparedness for potentially hostile terminations.

Pre-Conversation Evaluation

Assess how the employee is likely to react based on the circumstances and solicit input from the employee's manager, human resources (HR), legal, and corporate security.	
Use the behavioral threat assessment process when an employee's behavior is concerning or threatening.	
Evaluate an appropriate severance package or employee assistance program.	
Evaluate the best environment for the conversation to take place. If there are concerns about past aggressive action or violence, consideration should be given to terminating the employee off-site.	
Consider the best day and time to terminate the employee. The most common approach is Friday at the end of the workday, as this minimizes attention and does not interrupt the employee's typical schedule.	

Supporting Personnel and Employee Hardware

Identify who should be present at the time of the termination.	
Evaluate whether security needs to be present and where they will be during the conversation. An overbearing security presence may make the employee more hostile. e.g., in the room, hallway, or parking lot	
Terminate the employee's electronic access to work accounts and request their company equipment.	
Weigh the cost of used equipment against the risk of employees having to interact with a high-risk person. In instances of a hostile termination, the organization may remotely wipe the terminated employee's devices and not request them to be returned.	

TIP: IT access should be shut off simultaneously with the notification. Doing this too far in advance will likely "tip off" the employee.

Termination Conversation and Action

Direct the conversation toward the future, not the past.	
Be prepared to provide information such as termination date, final paycheck/severance, benefits, and job search resources.	
Determine who will escort the employee to their workstation to get their personal items and company property they need to return, and then escort them off-site. e.g., manager, security, or law enforcement	
Provide the employee with HR contact information should they have any questions or requests post-termination.	
Communicate the personnel change to the employee's previous team.	

Ongoing Assessment

Regroup to discuss the events, what can be improved in future terminations, and next steps. Are there any new concerns after the termination?	
Consider what resources are in place for continuous monitoring of former employees who pose a legitimate threat, and communicate employee information to the security team.	
Establish a technology-supported process to assess potentially violent former employees and their mental state over time. e.g., online behavior, financial difficulties, family difficulties, etc.	
Utilize a technology solution to collect, store, and manage threat data through the threat lifecycle.	

Proactively evaluate behavior signals and investigate incidents to prevent violence in the workplace

Ontic's Incidents, Investigations and Case Management solution is purpose-built within an end-to-end threat management solution for early capture of concerning behavior signals, pre-incident indicators, and alerts from many sources to help security teams mitigate the risks posed by hostile terminations.

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