

Workplace Violence

How Should I Handle A Verbal Threat From A Customer To Harm Me?

It's certainly scary if you have a customer threaten to do you bodily harm, and yes it does happen. The key is:

Security ALWAYS trumps customer service. While one always wants to defuse customers some situations safety should come first.

Some Steps To Follow If You Receive A Threat

1. Know and understand your employer's policy on how to handle these situations, and follow the steps. If there is no policy, see the other steps below.
2. Keep calm. Most verbal threats come to nothing, but that's NOT to say you should not take them seriously. Take them seriously, but keep your emotions in check if you can.
3. Disengage if possible to ensure you are out of any immediate danger.
4. Immediately report the incident to your supervisor, manager, and HR if that's possible. If they "blow off" your concerns, consider going over their heads if you feel your safety is at stake. It's not the best situation, but it's your physical safety.
5. When possible document on paper the details of the threat as soon as possible.
6. Contact security if that's available, and/or the police if that fits the context.

Remember, Uttering Threats Is Often A CRIME

Threatening someone is, in most places, a crime. You have a right to your safety and sense of safety. Sometimes it's the case that management do not WANT you to contact the police because it ends up as a kind of time consuming thing, but you need to make your own call, and be comfortable, and safe.

Since It's Safety...

If you need advice from the professionals (and please don't rely on this quick post for detailed instructions), **contact the police and see what they say AHEAD OF TIME**. They are the experts, not your supervisors or managers.

Being informed so you know what to do IF you receive a threat will not only help you remain calm, but it may save lives, yours and others.

Unique solution ID: #1124

Author: Robert Bacal

Last update: 2014-03-06 20:59