Terrorism and Targeted Violence (T2V) in the United States: Workplace Violence

OVERVIEW

This research brief explores workplace violence in the United States from January 1, 2023, through December 31, 2025. The data for this brief are provided from the Terrorism and Targeted Violence (T2V) in the United States database, which includes comprehensive information on 2,946 foiled, failed, and successful attacks in the U.S. and its territories that were designed to have a significant impact on public safety or the security of critical infrastructure and key resources. More information about the T2V database can be found in the "About T2V" section at the conclusion of this brief. The analysis presented here explores 271 premeditated plots in the T2V data that occurred in the workplace. It analyzes the rates of workplace violence in the U.S., the locations of these plots, the types of industries impacted by workplace violence, the weapon types used by perpetrators of workplace violence, and the intentions and outcomes of these plots. The brief also provides general statistics on the average age of the perpetrators, their gender, documented mental health concerns among the perpetrators, whether they were a former or current employee at the time of the event, and their grievances. It also further explores where these events took place, (e.g., at the workplace, private space, etc.) and who their intended targets were (e.g., co-worker, supervisor, subordinate, etc.).

KEY TERMS

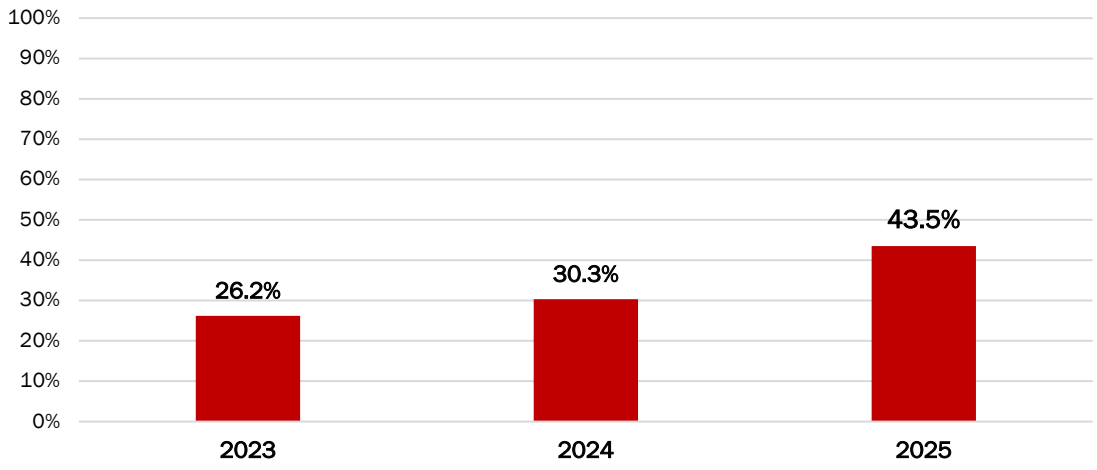
- **Targeted Violence** The T2V database uses the definition of targeted violence found in the Department of Homeland Security's 2019 Strategic Framework: "Any incident of violence that implicates homeland security and/or U.S. Department of Homeland Security activities, and in which a known or knowable attacker selects a particular target prior to the violent attack. Unlike terrorism, targeted violence includes attacks otherwise lacking a clearly discernible political, ideological, or religious motivation, but that are of such severity and magnitude as to suggest an intent to inflict a degree of mass injury, destruction, or death commensurate with known terrorist tactics. In the Homeland, targeted violence has a significant impact on the safety and security of our communities, schools, places of worship, and other public gatherings."[1]
- **Premeditation** Premeditation is an intentional and thoughtful action that is instigated by the perpetrator. In some cases, premeditation is determined based on the perpetrators' statements or the results of criminal investigations into the events. In other cases, premeditation is inferred from the types of weapons used in the acts (e.g., events are assumed to be premeditated when the perpetrators of the attacks use explosive devices or other complex weapons that require assembly).
- **Plot** A premeditated act in which there is evidence that the perpetrator(s) had identified a potential target or targets for the attack and engaged in at least one mobilization activity in preparation for committing the crime, such as acquiring a weapon or the components necessary to assemble a weapon, surveilling a target, or recruiting others to participate in the attack.
- **Workplace Violence** Premeditated acts or threats of violence directed at the current or former workplace of an individual who had a grievance about their current or former workplace. These also include plots in which individuals targeted a workplace on behalf of a current or former employee.
- **Foiled Plot** Premeditated plots to commit violent attacks or property crimes that were interrupted by law enforcement during their planning stages.
- **Failed Attack** Premeditated violent attacks in which the perpetrators failed to successfully deploy weapons due to technical malfunctions or operational errors.
- **Successful Attack** Premeditated attacks in which the perpetrators successfully deployed weapons (e.g., explosive devices were detonated, or shots were fired).
- **Low Casualty Attack** An event in which the perpetrator intended to commit, or committed, an attack resulting in three or fewer casualties (deaths or injuries).
- **Mass Casualty Attack** An event in which the perpetrator intended to commit, or committed, an attack resulting in four or more casualties (deaths or injuries).

[1] https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/19_0920_plcy_strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-targeted-violence.pdf

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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BY YEAR

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

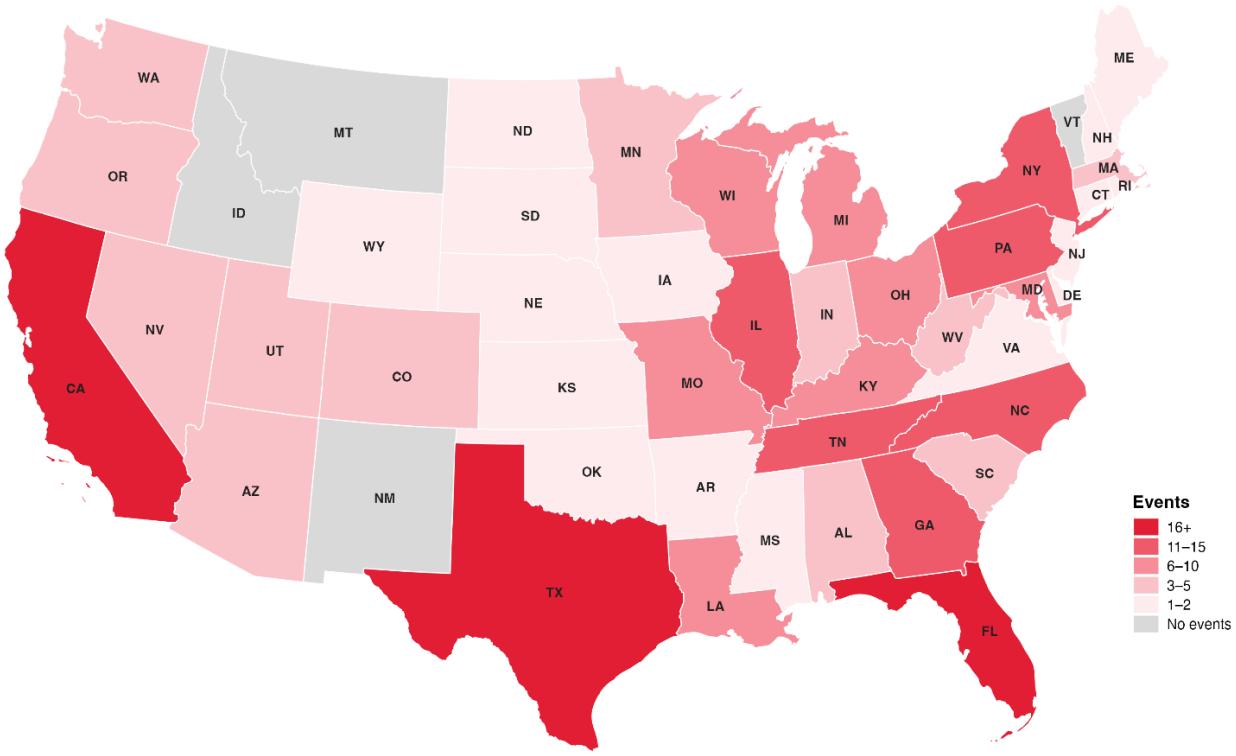


- There were 271 events in the United States categorized as workplace violence in the T2V database from January 1, 2023, to December 31, 2025—an average of approximately 7.5 incidents per month.
- Nearly 10% (9.2%) of the events in T2V were categorized as workplace violence.
- There were 71 events (26.2%) in 2023, 82 events (30.3%) in 2024, and 118 (43.5%) in 2025 categorized as workplace violence.
- The T2V data show that workplace violence is increasing in the Unites States, with 47 more events occurring in 2025 as compared to 2023.
- In addition to being categorized as workplace violence, nine events were also ideologically motivated, and 13 events were also school-based violence occurring at preschools, middle schools, and universities. For example, in an event categorized as both workplace violence and terrorism, the perpetrator was motivated by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) to carry out a mass casualty attack at his workplace, a Burger King in North Carolina, which was foiled by law enforcement.

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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BY LOCATION

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

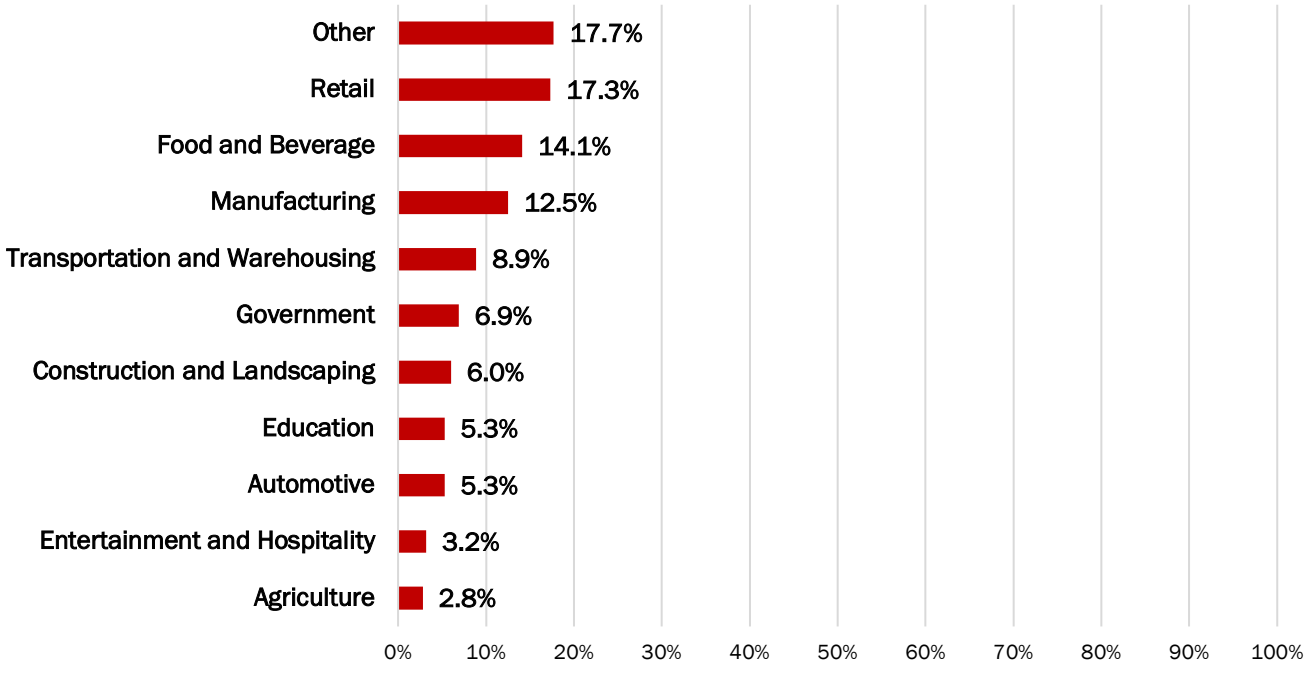


- The T2V data show that premeditated workplace violence occurred in 45 U.S. states and territories. There were no recorded events in Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Vermont, or Washington, D.C.
- Two events occurred in the U.S. territory of Guam. One of these incidents took place at a regional government office, in which a current employee brandished a firearm and threatened his co-worker several hours later after a workplace dispute.
- 25 events occurred in Texas, 23 in Florida, 22 in California, 15 in New York, and 15 in Pennsylvania.

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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BY INDUSTRY

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

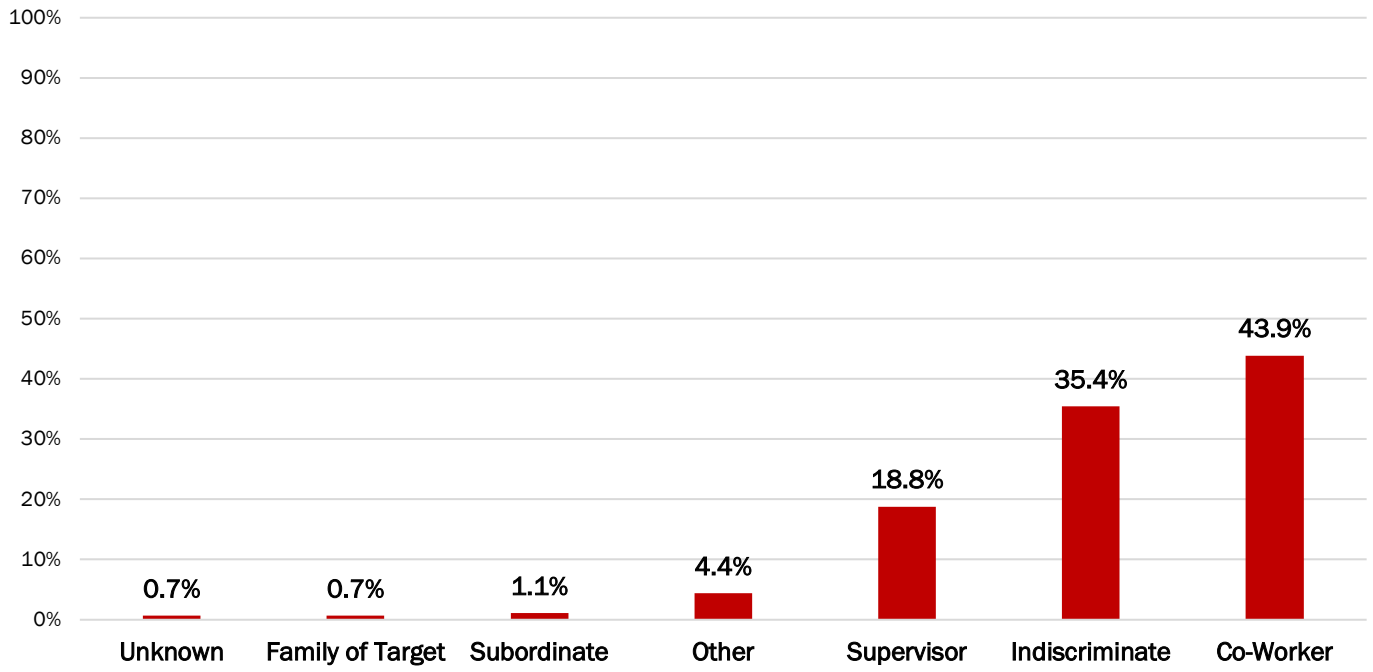


- The T2V data show that nearly one-third (31.4%) of workplace violence from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025, took place in the retail and food and beverage industries.
- Dollar Tree, Dollar General, and Walmart appear to be disproportionately targeted in the T2V data. Indeed, 19 workplace violence events occurred at these stores, representing nearly half (44.2%) of the events targeting the retail industry.
- It is important to note that 44 events (17.7%) of premeditated workplace violence are categorized as "other" in the T2V data. Any industry with six or less events was categorized as "other." These include industries such as the U.S. military, utilities, healthcare, and finance and insurance. One of these events includes an ideologically motivated attack targeting Old National Bank, in Louisville, Kentucky, in which the perpetrator, who was a current employee, killed five people and injured eight. A manifesto left by the perpetrator stated that the attack was meant to demonstrate the leniency of gun laws.
- 6.9% of workplace violence occurred within the government. These include attacks targeting the United States Post Office (USPS), Department of Veteran Affairs, and local government offices. Three of these events occurred within the USPS.
- 3.2% of workplace violence occurred in the entertainment and hospitality industry. These include events at casinos, resorts, hotels, and other entertainment and hospitality venues. For example, in 2023, an employee at a golfing venue in Thornton, Colorado, ambushed a co-worker and manager in the workplace parking lot, firing 12 rounds and killing the co-worker following a workplace dispute earlier in the day.

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VICTIMS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025



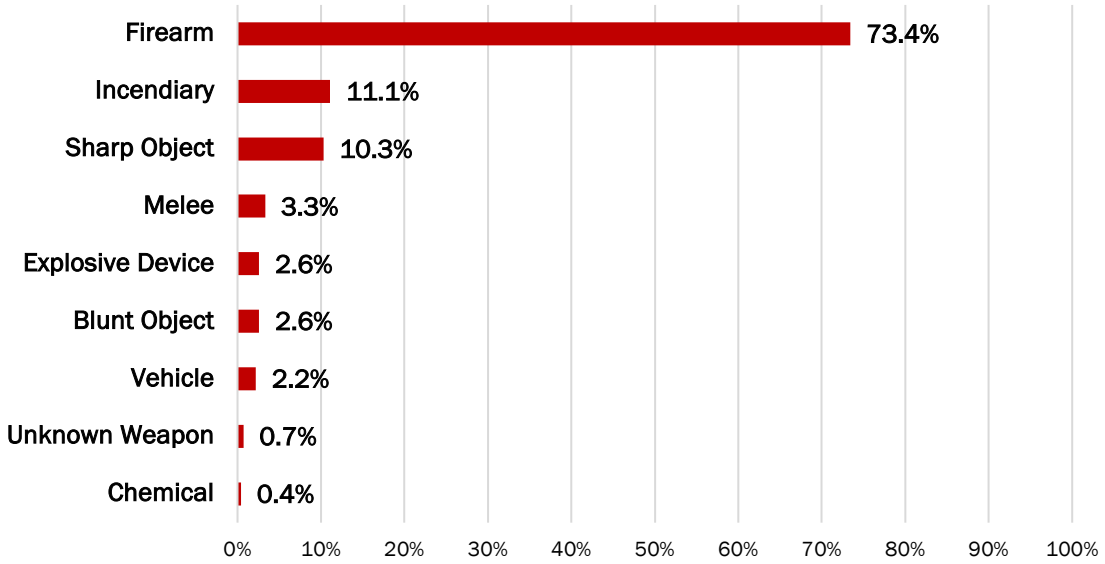
Note: Events can be coded for more than one victim type and, thus, categories can total more than 100 percent.

- The T2V data show that 43.9% of workplace violence events targeted co-workers/peers in the workplace. 105 of these 119 events were categorized as low casualty, in which the perpetrator targeted a specific co-worker.
- 35.4% of workplace violence events in the T2V data were considered indiscriminate, meaning the perpetrator did not necessarily have a specific victim in mind but rather targeted the workplace as a whole. These events indiscriminately targeted supervisors, co-workers, and anyone else in the building at the time of the attack, including customers/clients.
- The T2V data demonstrate that workplace violence events are more likely to target supervisors (18.8%) as opposed to subordinates (1.1%).
- 4.4% of workplace violence events targeted victims categorized as "other" in the T2V data. These include incidents of property damage, in which perpetrators set fire to their workplace late in the evening, when no one was present in the building. These also include events in which only customers or clients were targeted in the workplace and one incident in which a third-grade teacher threatened to target students in Louisiana.
- In two (0.7%) workplace violence events in the T2V data, the perpetrators threatened the children of their co-workers.
- 90.6% of these events occurred at the workplace, 5.2% occurred offsite in private spaces, and 4.1% occurred offsite in public spaces. The majority of events targeting victims offsite in private spaces occurred at the private residences of the victims.

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WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BY WEAPON TYPE

January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025



Note: Events can be coded for more than one weapon type and, thus, categories can total more than 100 percent.

- The T2V data show that firearms (73.4%) were the most commonly used weapons in workplace violence, accounting for 199 of the workplace violence events in the data.
- Following firearms, incendiary devices (11.1%) were the second most commonly used weapon in workplace violence. These events include perpetrators setting fire to their workplace and, in one event, a former co-worker's house.
- Sharp objects (10.3%) were also another commonly used weapon.
- The use of chemicals was the least likely weapon used in workplace violence. There was only one incident of this captured in the data, in which a perpetrator sprayed brake cleaner on the back of their co-worker's neck and then set the victim on fire with a lighter, injuring the victim.
- It is important to note that incidents of premeditated workplace violence do not always involve a weapon. Indeed, in 3.3% of these attacks in the data, the perpetrators assaulted their victims using "melee," which involves the use of hands, fists, and feet.
- The perpetrators legally owned their weapons in 70.1% of workplace violence cases in the T2V data. However, in 15.9% of these events, the perpetrators illegally owned their weapons, and in 5.9%, the weapons were stolen within the workplace. These 16 events, in which a perpetrator stole the weapon from their workplace, includes company vehicles as a weapon to run over their victims, a box cutter, a block of cement, and even firearms.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF PERPETRATORS IN WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

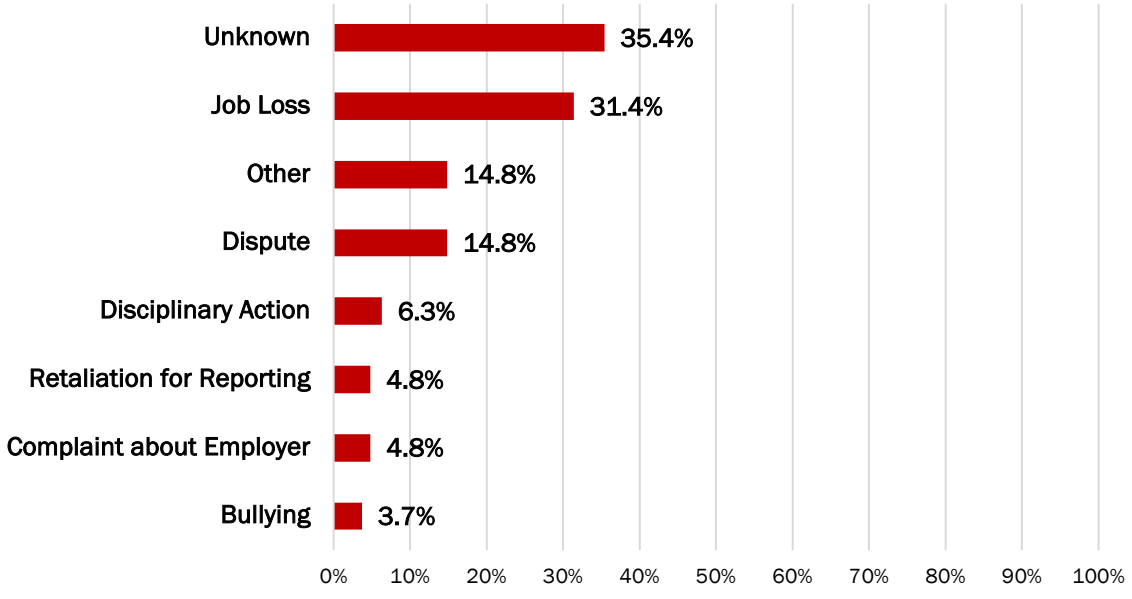
January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

Characteristic	
Average Age	37.1
Male	89.5%
Mental Health Concerns	31.7%

- According to the T2V data, the average age of perpetrators involved in workplace violence in the T2V data is 37.1.
- Approximately 0.8% of workplace violence in the T2V data were committed by individuals under the age of 18.
- The youngest perpetrator involved in T2V workplace violence was just 15 years old when they committed their crime, while the oldest was 77 years old.
- The T2V data demonstrate that men are more likely to be involved in workplace violence, accounting for 89.5% of the cases.
- The T2V data show that nearly one-third (31.7%) of the perpetrators involved in workplace violence had evidence of mental health concerns. These include schizophrenia, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and bipolar disorder.
- According to the T2V data, more than half of the perpetrators (54.6%) of workplace violence were current employees and 40.7% of the perpetrators were former employees at the time of the crime. 4.7% of the perpetrators of workplace violence were categorized as "other," which include romantic partners, family members, and friends of current or former employees of a targeted workplace who assisted them in carrying out the attacks. In one event, an employee hired an individual to assault their co-worker following information provided by the victim that resulted in their demotion at work.

PERPETRATOR GRIEVANCES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

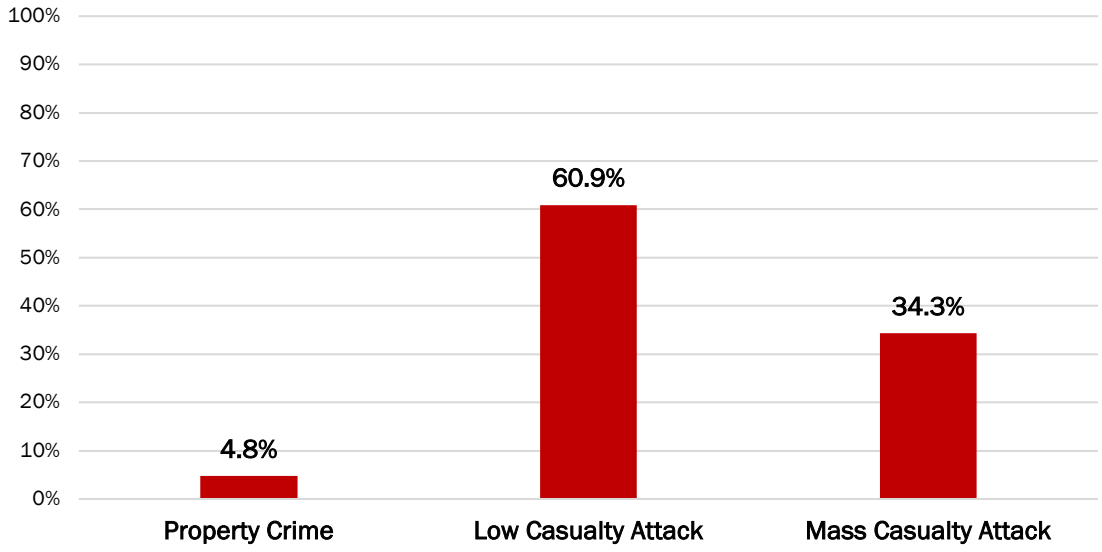


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- According to the T2V data, job loss (31.4%) was the most common grievance among perpetrators of workplace violence, present in 85 events. The majority of these perpetrators had recently been terminated from their jobs or they believed they were about to lose their jobs.
- In 15.1% of workplace violence events in T2V, the grievance was categorized as "other." These include ideological motivations, demotion, and not receiving a promotion.
- 14.8% of workplace violence events were the result of a dispute in the workplace. The majority of these events occurred following an argument between co-workers. In one event, an employee was asked to leave after getting into an argument with their co-workers. Later that day, the perpetrator returned to the workplace and shot and killed one co-worker.
- In 6.3% of workplace violence events, the grievance was recorded as disciplinary action. Disciplinary actions include suspensions, warnings, and unpaid administrative leave.
- In 4.8% of workplace violence events, perpetrators were motivated by retaliation for reporting. These include complaints reported to leadership about the perpetrator as well as reporting on the perpetrator to authorities. For example, in one event, a female co-worker filed a protection order against their co-worker, resulting in him losing his job. The perpetrator later abducted and fatally shot two co-workers, including the female victim.
- In 4.4% of workplace violence events, the perpetrator had a complaint about their employer, which include labor violations, cut hours, unfair pay, and micromanagement.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BY INTENDED PLOT TYPE

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025

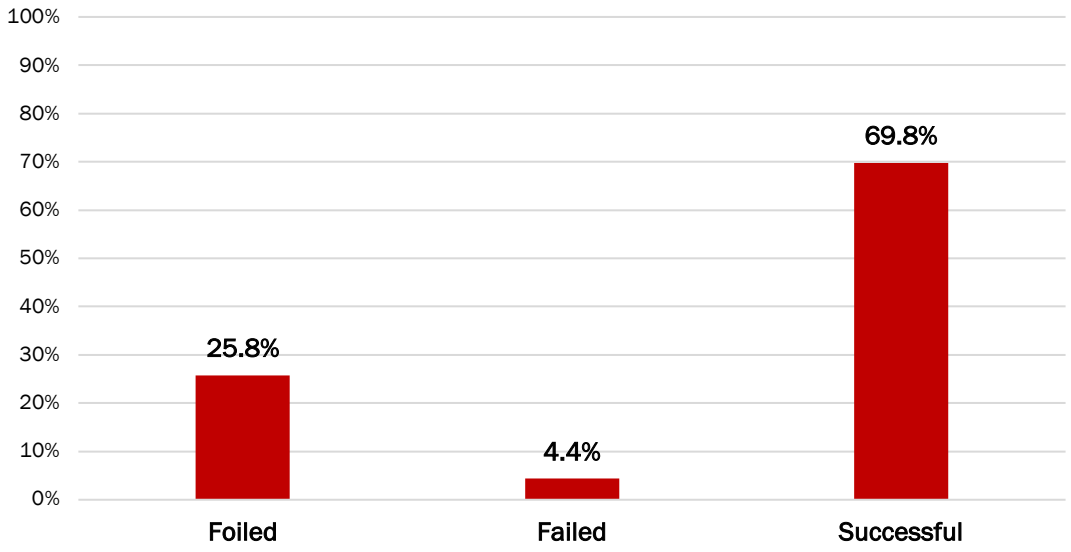


- The T2V data show that while the majority of workplace violence events targeted people (258 events), 4.8% (13 events) of these crimes targeted workplace property. Most of these events include perpetrators setting fire to their workplaces in the late evening when no one was present in the building.
- 60.9% of workplace violence in the T2V data were intended low casualty attacks, meaning that the perpetrators intended to target three or fewer people. Most often these were targeted attacks of a specific individual in the workplace.
- The T2V data show that in over one-third (34.3%) of workplace violence events, the perpetrator intended to carry out a mass casualty attack. These were typically indiscriminate attacks. This includes seven successful mass casualty attacks, in which four or more people were killed or injured.

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OUTCOMES OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

January 1, 2023 - December 31, 2025



- The T2V data demonstrate that from January 1, 2023 – December 31, 2025, 25.8% of workplace violence events in the T2V data were foiled, meaning that the plots were disrupted before they could be carried out. These are often the result of community and family tips to law enforcement.
- Only 4.4% of these incidents failed. For example, in one case, a perpetrator's firearm misfired when he attempted to open fire on his two superiors at a County Air Pollution Control Bureau office in Tennessee.
- 69.8% of these plots were successful, meaning the perpetrators of the crimes successfully deployed their weapons.
- The success rate of workplace violence events is much higher compared to the T2V data overall, in which about half of the events are successful (53.1%) and 42.5% of the events are foiled by law enforcement.
- According to the T2V data, attacks in the workplace resulted in 102 victim deaths and 109 victim injuries. Twenty-eight perpetrators were killed, and five were injured as a result of their crimes.

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ABOUT T2V

The Terrorism and Targeted Violence (T2V) in the United States database is a project housed at the University of Maryland that seeks to provide policymakers, practitioners, and researchers with comprehensive data on violent events occurring in the United States and its territories that are designed to have a significant impact on public safety and/or the security of critical infrastructure and community services. The database includes successful, failed, and foiled events that meet the following inclusion criteria:

- A premeditated act that is dangerous to, or potentially dangerous to, human life or the security of critical infrastructure or key resources and involves a degree of planning and a target;
- Is a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any subdivision of the United States;
- Is intended to intimidate, coerce, or otherwise impact a broader population beyond the target(s) of the immediate act or to generate publicity for the perpetrator and/or their grievances;
- And occurs within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

The T2V data include terrorism events, targeted violence occurring in school and workplace settings, public mass violence motivated by personal grievances, and other forms of violence that impact public safety and that of critical infrastructure. Mass violence events are defined as attacks that are designed to result in, or resulted in, the death or injury of four or more victims. The T2V data do not include events linked to gang activity, organized crime, interpersonal or intimate partner violence, crimes with a purely financial motive, or protest violence that were spontaneous or otherwise unplanned by the perpetrator prior to the event. For foiled plots to be included in the data, there must be evidence that the perpetrator(s) had identified a potential target or targets for the attack and engaged in at least one mobilization activity in preparation for committing the crime. This could include acquiring a weapon or the components necessary to assemble a weapon, surveilling a target, raising funds for the attack, recruiting others to participate in the attack, or writing a manifesto or preparing other legacy tokens to be released prior to, or discovered after, an attack. Threats that do not involve at least one mobilization indicator or are described as “hoaxes” or “not credible” are not included in T2V even if they resulted in criminal charges. All data for T2V are compiled using public sources, including high quality news accounts and public court records.

PROJECT TEAM

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Researcher: **Leah Peckham**

Please direct questions to **Sheehan Kane** at Skane2@umd.edu.

START The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) is a university-based research, education and training center comprised of an international network of scholars committed to the scientific study of terrorism, responses to terrorism and related phenomena. Led by the University of Maryland, START is a Department of Homeland Security Emeritus Center of Excellence that is supported by multiple federal agencies and departments. START uses state-of-the-art theories, methods and data from the social and behavioral sciences to improve understanding of the origins, dynamics and effects of terrorism; the effectiveness and impacts of counterterrorism and CVE; and other matters of global and national security. For more information, visit www.start.umd.edu or contact START at infostart@umd.edu.