



To Arm or Not to Arm?

That is the question for many business owners.

After several well-publicized incidents of workplace violence across the Country, Arizona business leaders are looking to step up their security. Many are asking if armed officers should be added to their security force.

Jack Amos, Director of Security for Anderson Security Agency in Phoenix said, "We've seen a 25-30% increase in the number of calls about armed protection over the past six to eight months." Amos attributes the increase to, "today's volatile economic condition." Times are tough and Amos believes that's leading many business owners to take a closer look at their asset and personal protection.

Amos spent 30 years in law enforcement and eight years in the military before joining Anderson Security. He served several years as a force protection specialist in Bosnia where he witnessed a violent trend in Europe, "That trend is coming this way," Amos said.

Some may scoff at that statement but we've seen the evidence on the evening news over the past 10 months. On November 5th of last year, Major Nidal Malik Hasan allegedly killed 13 people and injured another 43 at Fort Hood. In February of this year six employees at the University of Alabama were shot, three of them lost their lives. In July, an Albuquerque, N.M. man returned to his former workplace with a semiautomatic handgun and shot six employees. Two were killed and four wounded before he took his own life. And most recently, Omar Thornton killed eight innocent co-workers at a beer distributorship in Hartford, Connecticut.

Dr. Ken Robbins, clinical professor of psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison recently told ABC News that extreme workplace violence is a growing problem.

"We know that violence is the second leading cause of occupational death. It's not as uncommon as we would like it to be," said Robbins.

Statistics compiled by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration back up Dr. Robbins' claims. According to OSHA, violence is the leading cause of death in the workplace for women and the second-leading cause for men.

According to the Bureau of Labor Records, between 2004 and 2008 an average of 564 work-related homicides occurred each year in the United States. The records show a majority of workplace shootings were committed by robbers. But, co-workers and former co-workers were the assailants in about 63, or 12 percent of all shootings in 2008, with the average being around 68 per year between 2004 and 2008.

The facts are impossible to ignore and that's why Anderson Security Agency invested thousands of dollars to send 12 of their best and brightest officers through a two day firearms training program at the end of August. Executive Vice President Debbie Anderson says, "We see that there is a greater need for armed officers and that is why we invested in this special training."

Anderson's Director of Security, Jack Amos, says safety is a priority when providing armed security. With that in mind Anderson Security conducts deep background checks and intense interviews before allowing any officer to carry a firearm. "The safety of our clients, our officers, and the entire community is our primary concern," said Amos.

To arm, or not to arm. That's a tough question for any employer. Whatever the answer may be, Anderson Security Agency is now more prepared than ever to provide the type of protection its clients require.