



*Workplace Violence at the New York State  
Department of Motor Vehicles*

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Data Brief

Summary of Annual Review of Workplace Violence Incident  
Reports, 2023 - 2024

February 28, 2025

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# ***Workplace Violence at the New York State Department of Motor Vehicles: Summary of Annual Review of Workplace Violence Incident Reports, 2023 – 2024 - A Data Brief***

## ***Background***

“Workplace violence has become an alarming phenomenon worldwide” according to the International Labour Office of the United Nations.<sup>1</sup> In the United States (U.S.), it is the third leading cause of death on the job. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, there were 5,283 fatal work injuries due to acute traumatic events recorded in 2023 and workplace fatalities due to violent acts across all occupations totaled 740.<sup>2</sup> Among workers in health care and social assistance there were 133 work-related deaths overall, with 23 (17.3%) from “violent acts.”<sup>3</sup>

Workplace violence is estimated to impact 1.3 million U.S. workers annually. Based on 2014-2019 figures, the Bureau of Justice Statistics study estimates that social workers working in mental health have an annual average victimization rate of 46.1 per 10,000 and others who work in mental health (non-social workers) have an even higher rate at 51.7 per 10,000.<sup>4</sup>

While workplace injury and illness rates have declined since 1992, the rate of injury for workplace violence has increased to 4.3 per 10,000 workers. Nonfatal injury rates leading to days away from work, job transfer or restriction (DART) continue to be high for all industries (6.2 per 10,000 workers).

Physical assault, verbal abuse, bullying/mobbing, sexual and racial harassment, and psychological stress result in tragic fatalities and ongoing suffering among injured civil servants who are dedicated to serving the public. Violence does not only occur as one single incident but also may be expressed in repeated incidents which together create severe harm. Work-related stress is also widespread and linked to serious health issues (i.e., high blood pressure, depression, and musculoskeletal disorders).<sup>17</sup> Stressful work conditions may escalate and play a role in how workplace violence happens.<sup>18</sup>

## ***Workplace Violence Incident Reports -- Annual Review***

According to **12 NYCRR 800.6 Sections (g)(2),(i)(2,4&5)** workplace violence review must take place annually. The NYS DMV conducts their annual review in October. CSEA and PEF and management were supplied documentation by the DMV and appropriate staff present for the review in 2024.

All incident reports (n= 271) were reviewed over two full working days. Incidents took place between April 18, 2023, and August 29, 2024. The review committee determines if an incident meets the definition of workplace violence and if so, the group further characterizes the incidents. The committee determined that 53 incidents did not meet the definition of workplace violence. Since those incident reports contained problematic circumstances reported by employees, these were referred to appropriate departments (i.e. sexual harassment, disciplinary issue) for further action.

## ***RESULTS***

### ***Geographic Region***

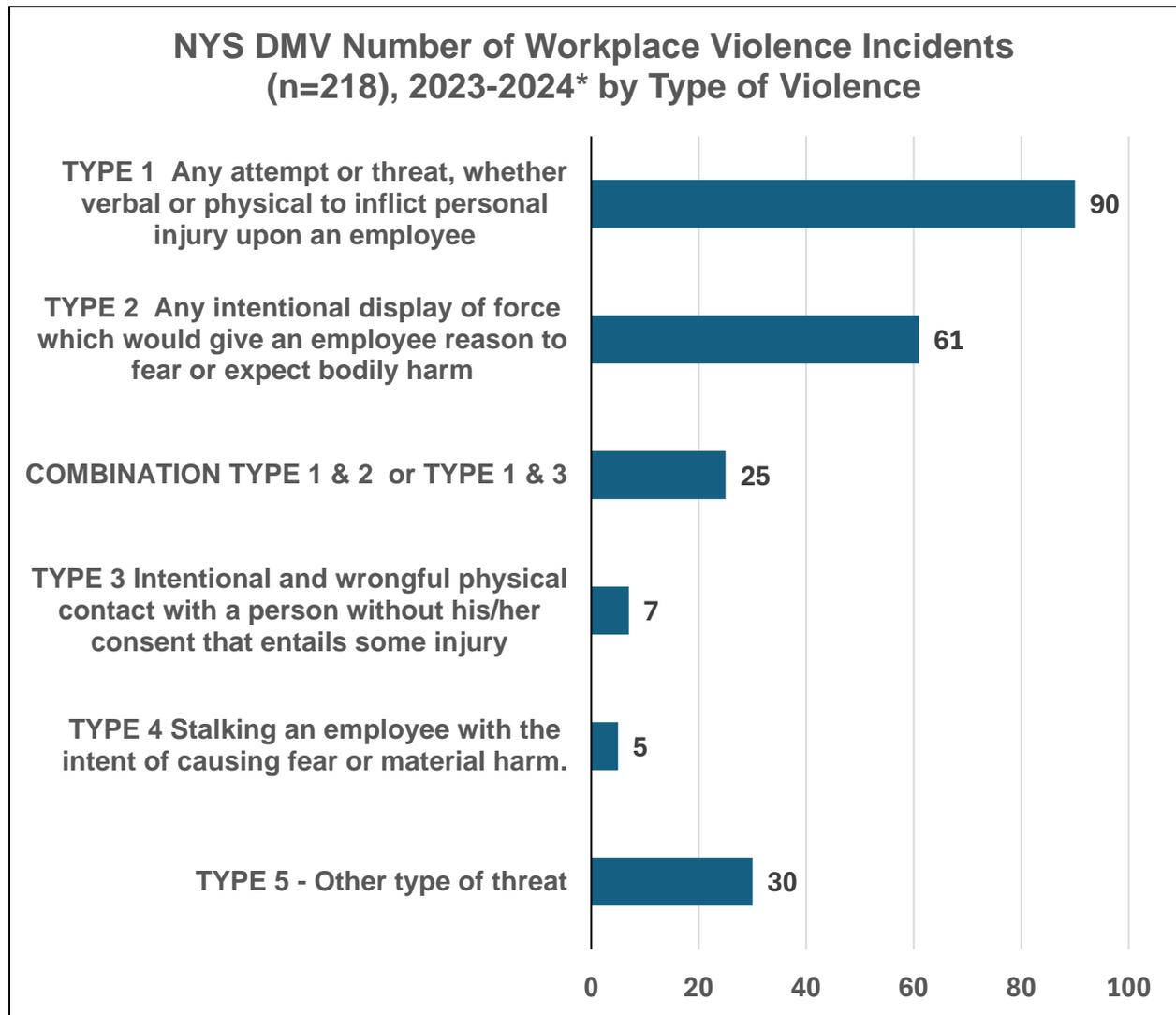
Incidents determined to meet the definition of workplace violence (n=218) were characterized by region. Workplace violence incidents occurred evenly across DMV regions. Table 1

<b>NYS DMV Incidents of Workplace Violence, *2023-2024, By Region</b>		
<b>Region</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Rochester	1	0.5%
Buffalo	3	1.4%
Syracuse	8	3.7%
Mid-Hudson	16	7.3%
Albany	24	11.0%
Long Island	30	13.8%
New York City	136	62.4%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>218</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

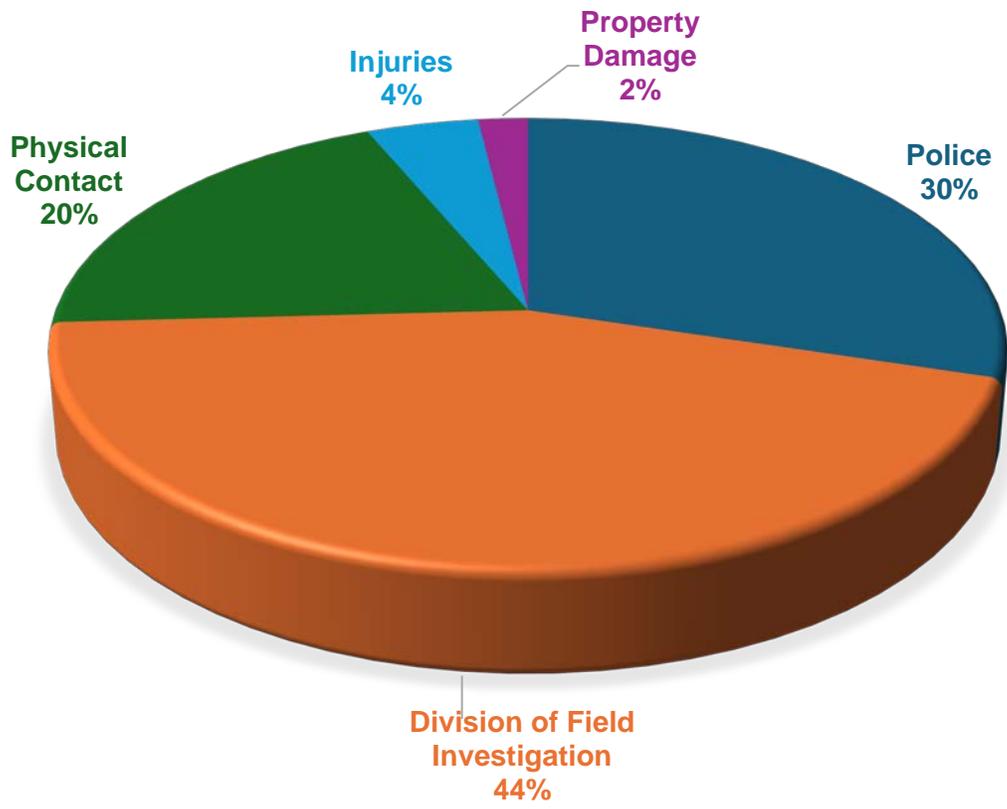
*\*April 18, 2023, and August 29, 2024*

## ***What Kind of Violence?***

Incidents determined to be workplace violence (n=218) were characterized according to a rubric supplied by the DMV. Definitions, counts and percentages of those categories appear below in Table 1. Some incidents were deemed to encompass two definitions as noted.



**CHARACTERISTICS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE, NYS DMV,  
2023-2024**



***Motor Vehicle License Examiners (MVLEs)***

Those who give road tests have had very difficult workplace violence incidents. Narratives below are de-identified and altered in small ways to protect identity, but they are selected as examples to fully describe the incidents. These circumstances exemplify the vulnerability the MVLEs experience while serving as test examiners in the community setting.

## ***Selected Representative Incidents from the Road Test Unit of the NYS DMV***

*Giving road test to driving school applicant and while parking the applicant bumped car and the owner came out and verbally swore at the examiner. He pounded on the back of his own car and pulled at his own bumper. The examiner states there was no damage to his vehicle. The examiner called the police.*

*The applicant became very angry after failing the road test. Took a chair that was standing by the fence and threw it into the street. Then came over to me and started blaming me for failing his road test. Blamed me for ruining his plans.*

*The applicant failed to yield to pedestrians in crosswalk during the road test. The examiner pulled him over and ended the test and the examiner exited the vehicle. The offender followed him while yelling he should punch him out for failing him for bullshit and he doesn't care if he goes to jail. He continued to follow him and started video recording him while yelling curses and threatening to punch him*

*After completing the outside inspection, the examiner entered the Class A vehicle with the applicant. The applicant was given instructions to do his in-vehicle inspection and engine start. The applicant made an error and asked to restart. After two minutes, he was unable to start the vehicle. When the examiner ended the test, he blew up at her. He called her a liar, a fat pig and a stupid bitch. An instructor from a driving school pulled the client back when he charged the examiner. Client told examiner to "fuck off."*

*The examiner stated, "the applicant intentionally drove recklessly with me in the car while giving death threats and cursing. When the car stopped, he pushed me out of the car touching my work documents and tablet. He grabbed his permit from my papers, opened the door reaching over me and pushed me out.*

*The instructor was giving road test and providing feedback during the test. The applicant made several short-left turns. On the 3rd left turn examiner mentioned that "if there was a school bus in that lane, you would not be able to make a turn like that. His response was well no one was there. He insisted examiner was wrong and was agitated. Heading back to the road test site the applicant pulled the car over and drove off, leaving the examiner stranded.*

*The applicant went down the wrong side of the road, so the test was ended early. Upon returning the applicants father said, "you people suck." The responded from across the street and the father then crossed the street and said "are you saying my daughter sucks said no -you. The father threatened, "I spent 9 years in the army I can tear you apart."*

*During the road test the applicant was speeding. I asked the applicant what the speed limit was, and he said 30, but didn't reduce speed. I asked the applicant again what the speed limit is, and he again said 30 and didn't slow down. He then said that the law states you can do 5 miles per hour over the speed limit. I advised him that you can't do that, and the speed limit is what the sign states(30). He started getting agitated. While doing the parallel parking I had to stop applicant from hitting the car he was parking with. He started yelling saying that New York sucks and that I suck. He then stated he was done with the test, and we were going back. He took off and headed to the light to turn left. Once light turned green he turned and we were heading back, he was in the wrong lane to go straight, and I had to tell him to make a lane change. The rest of the way he was yelling and was very agitated. I felt very threatened by the way he was acting and talking. I must ask him to slow down again as he was speeding back. When we got back he didn't pull over he stopped in the middle of the road and told me to get the f#%\$ out of his car. I felt very threatened again and went to put his results card on his dashboard. When I opened the door it blew the card toward him and he said I f@#\$ing threw it at him and he exited the car and charged toward me telling me to hand it to him like a man, which I did. His accompanied driver was asking me what I said to him that made him mad, and I replied nothing. They then left and returned a minute later and stopped in the middle of the road again by my road test line and started yelling and screaming to them how awful and racist I was. He told his friend that came with him that he's doing bad because of all the white people here. After about 5 minutes or so of yelling he finally left.*

*MVLE was giving a road test to a client. While performing the 3 point turn a car pulled up to them and started honking at them. The person inside was visibly upset. MVLE put his hand out the window to gesture to the person to wait. The person began to yell and curse at MVLE and got out of the vehicle. The person ran up to the vehicle at shouted at MVLE "I will slap the shit out of you". As MVLE attempted to exit the vehicle the person charged at MVLE and kicked the door closed almost slamming MVLE's hand in the door. MVLE also says the window hit his face. The person held the door closed with his knee preventing MVLE from opening the door. MVLE then identified himself as a New York State employee conducting a road test and told the person that he was going to report him. The person stated that he was going to report MVLE first, ran back to his car and pretended to call 911. MVLE got out of the car and attempted to take a picture of the person's registration. The person began to threaten MVLE again saying, "I will kick your face in if you don't get away from my vehicle". The person began to rev his engine at MVLE as if he was going to run him over. MVLE took the picture of the registration and walked away as the person was still shouting threats at him. MVLE completed the road test he was giving and called his supervisor when it was completed. This person was not an applicant. He was a local person that lives in the neighborhood that the road test site is located in. MVLE's tablet was recording during the altercation.*

## *Conclusion*

This brief data-focused review demonstrates that the NYS DMV takes workplace violence seriously and is compliant with NYS Workplace Violence law. The labor-management workplace violence committee reviews up-to-date workplace violence written policy which is frequently amended to apply solutions derived from the annual review findings. CSEA intends to continue this collaborative stance to ensure members are protected from workplace violence with continuously improving workplace violence practices in the field and in the offices.

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For more information on workplace violence: <https://cseany.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/WPVOVERVIEW.pdf>

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