

Engineering  
Facilities  
Environment  
Utilities  
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Defence  
Justice  
**Better Places**

# Reducing Violent Incidents

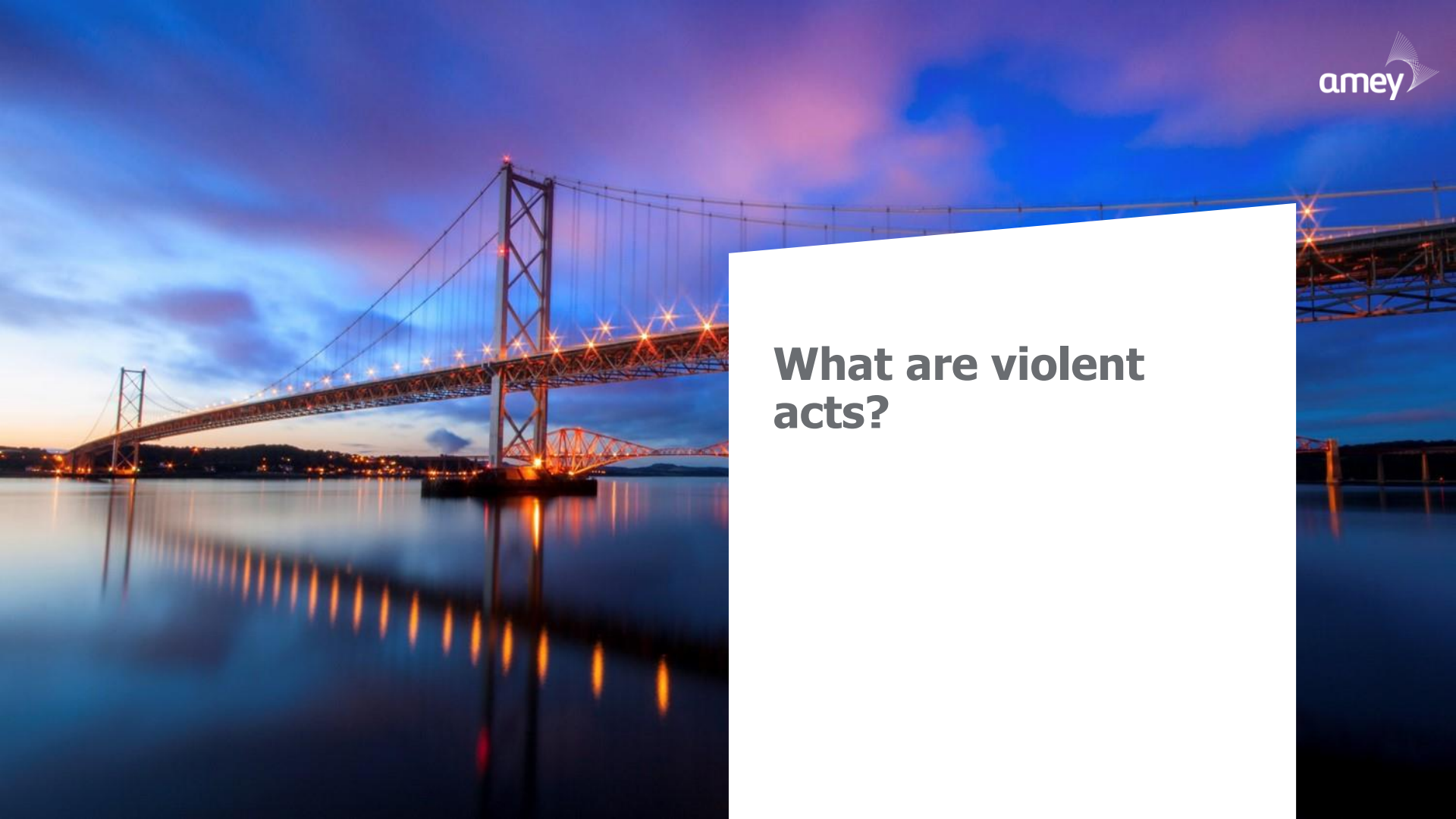
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Creating **better places** to live, work and travel

Putting People First | Delivering Great Service | Creating Better Solutions



A long-exposure photograph of a suspension bridge at night. The bridge's lights are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a mix of deep blue and purple hues. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

**What are violent acts?**

# Violent Acts



Saul attacks David (1860 Woodcut by Julius Schnorr von Karolsfeld)

**Violence** is “The use of physical force so as to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy.”

The HSE has defined work-related violence as: “any incident in which a person is abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances relating to their work.”

# Are we all pre-disposed to violent acts?

There are differing points of view:

*"In spite of the many studies on biological pre-dispositions of violent and aggressive behaviour, there is no conclusive body of evidence to indicate a strong correlation exists"*

(Anderson, W.R., (2001), Biological Predisposition of Violent and Aggressive Behaviour; *Futurics*. Vol25 1&2, PP72-76)

*"Despite the essentially peaceful lives most of us lead most of the time, killing is programmed into the human brain. This is because, as with most animals, individuals in the natural world must be able to defend themselves and their offspring."*

(Fields, R.D., (2015), *Why We Snap*; Dutton, New York)

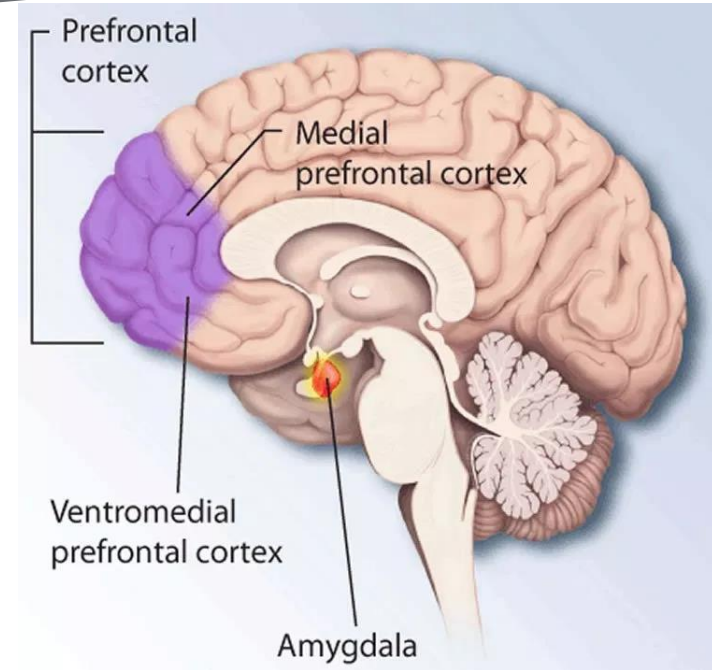


A long-exposure photograph of a suspension bridge at night. The bridge's lights are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a mix of deep blue and purple hues. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the word "Triggers".

# Triggers

# The Amygdala Hijack

- The amygdala:
  - Trigger point for emotional distress, anger, impulse, and fear
  - Brain's radar for threat
  - In an instant it can take over the rest of the brain—an amygdala hijack
  - It is very small!
- When this circuitry takes over, it acts as the bad boss, leading you to take actions you might regret later
- Classic fight-flight-or-freeze response
- The amygdala often makes mistakes - it only receives a small fraction of the signals received from the senses



Goleman, D., (2011), *Emotional Mastery Leadership Excellence*, 28(6), P12-13

# Triggers





# Triggers





# What could trigger a confrontational situation at roadworks?

- Rigid rules / directions
- Loss of control of own destiny
- Prejudice/Attitude
- Lack of understanding
- Personalities
- Emotions



A long suspension bridge, likely the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, is shown at night. The bridge's steel structure is illuminated with warm orange lights, and its reflection is clearly visible in the calm water below. The sky is a deep blue with some lighter clouds, and the overall scene is serene and majestic.

## **Types of Confrontational Situation**

# Types of confrontational situations:

- Actual physical harm
- Verbal / Racial abuse
- Aggressive / threatening behaviour
- Humiliation
- Harassment



# How does Amey define work-related violence?

- Any incident in which an employee is verbally abused, threatened or assaulted in circumstances arising out of or in connection with his or her work.





# What is the Amey Policy on Work-related violence?

- All our employees have the right to be treated with consideration, dignity and respect.
- Instances of verbal abuse, violence and harassment to any employee by member(s) of the general public will not be tolerated.



## Current situation

Operatives presume a certain level of aggressive behaviour, violence, harassment, verbal abuse is “normal”

**Amey management believe this is not acceptable for our employees and are tackling this head on to keep people safe**



**Target Zero:  
keeping  
people safe**



A long-exposure photograph of a suspension bridge at night. The bridge's lights are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a mix of deep blue and purple hues. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the word "Incidents".

## Incidents

# Road Worker Abuse





# Road Worker Abuse

- Incident reported to Police
- Unfortunately no prosecution secured
- Vehicle number plates were cloned
- Site was in the vicinity of a Travelling Community – Police believed it may have been connected but unable to conclusively prove
- Operatives shaken but unharmed
- Maintained cool and level headed approach throughout
- Maintained open, non-threatening stance – note the hand positions adopted

## Some other incidents

- 27/09/2019 - Member of public came over to Amey employees who were working outside a property. They threatened them, they also had a weapon we believe it was a knife, the member of public who was threatening said that the people in the house owe this man money, they also threatened that they are going to take the equipment out of the van also said more people are going to come up – Operatives retreated to another location; Police called.
- 06/09/2019 – Highway Inspector reported today that he was in the Springhill area and had a cross bow bolt fired toward him / a nearby tree. He took a photo of the bolt in the tree, but did not report the incident to the police at the time - he called 101 some time later. It also appears that he did not report this to his line manager until today? – Police informed
- 25/07/2019 - A taxi has pulled up inside the enclosure to pick up a customer, there is ample space for him to do this elsewhere then he started to proceed to use racist language towards me and then started to become aggressive by pushing me – Reported to PSCO

## Some other incidents

- 24/04/2019 - A highways inspector was assaulted by a thrown object from a vehicle passing while on walking inspection. Vehicle details have been taken – Reported to Police
- 01/04/2019 - A teenager drove onto the road when he was on his push bike and we narrowly missed. He then started to verbally abuse me and my co worker and started to throw some sort of bricks at the vehicle. We braked and avoided him then drove off as soon as he started to become aggressive – Reported to PSCO
- 01/03/2019 - X has been assaulted by 3 lads on motorbikes, he had eggs thrown at him, which hit his head and then they returned and threw a piece of brick which also hit his head, the hard hat has taken most of the impact, but he is bruised – Operative attended medical centre; Reported to Police

# Some other incidents

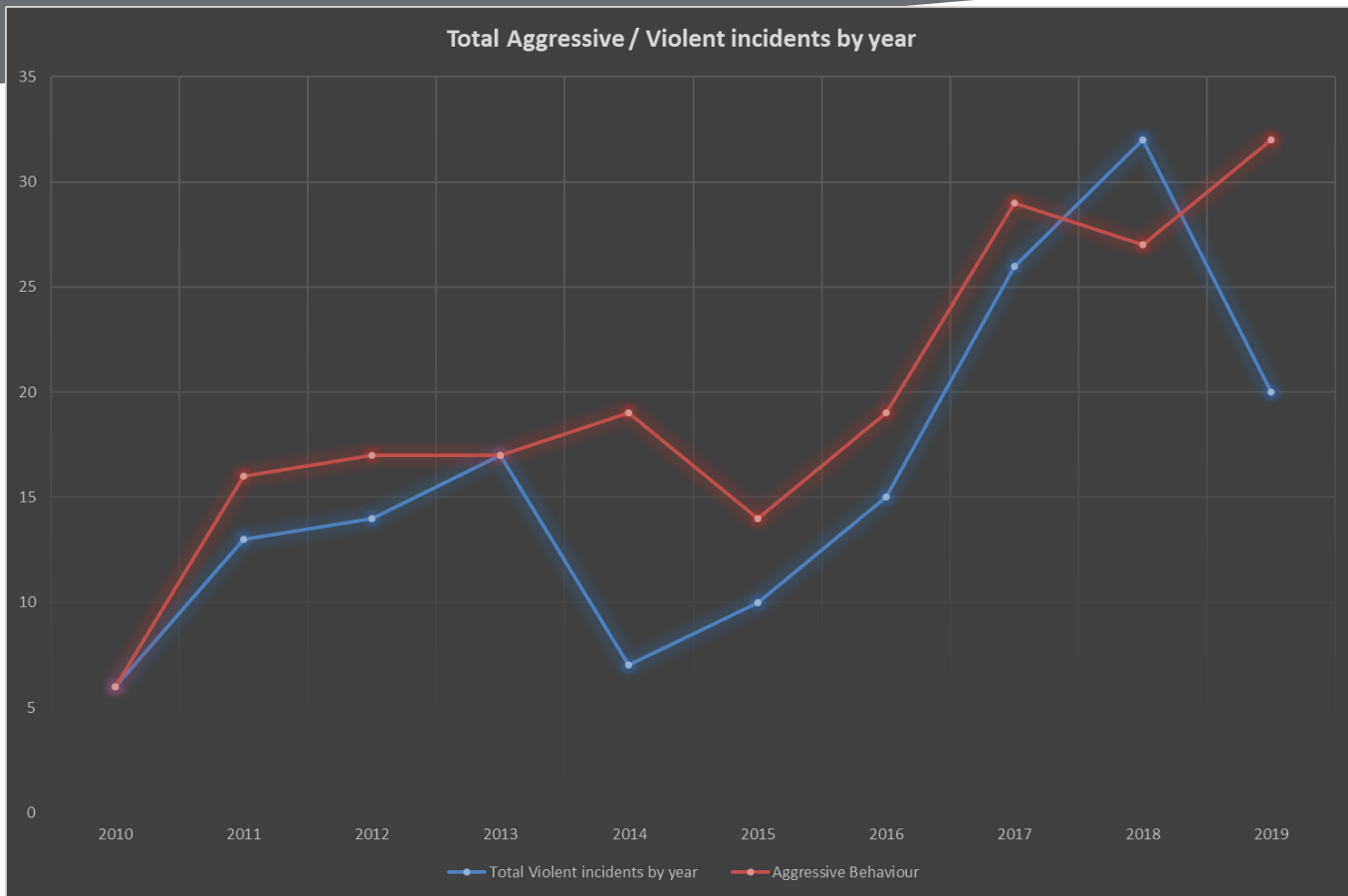
- 08/03/2012 - A person wanted to move the barriers, he got out of his car to move them, operative X then approached him to advise the man that he would do it. The man then got aggressive and swore. The brother and father of this man then joined in from a neighbouring house. Kevin then walked away from the incident but was pursued by the man and his brother who caught up with him and punched him in the face – Police investigation
- 03/10/2014 - Operative was working on the carriageway and somebody has shot him with an air rifle – Police Investigation
- 11/02/2017 - While on gate duty a car tried to get through the barriers. When operative X told them that they could not access occupants of car became verbally aggressive. Operative X took a photo of vehicle registration plate and continued to phone the police. The occupants got out of the car and started to physically abuse operative X by punching him several times in the face. Other team members and a member of the public came and stopped the assault – Police investigation
- 11/01/2018 - We have been shot at by someone with an air pistol – Police investigation



# Incident with outcome

- 09/10/2018
- We had a full site set up for cutting down trees when a car has driven through the cones, through the site, and drove over the climbers rope, which made the climber drop but not fall to the ground
- Climber could have fallen and be struck by the vehicle, also the rest of the team could have been injured by the vehicle
- We got the registration and phoned the police, who are on site at the moment
- Successful prosecution of driver – Driving without due care and attention

# Some statistics



# Analysis

- Violent Acts have reduced from 2019
  - Operatives re-trained in conflict management
  - CCTV fitted to certain vehicles
  - Reduction in value of work undertaken
- Abuse experienced has gone up
  - Already surpassed last years reported abusive acts
  - Reporting of incidents has improved as a result of training
- Out of 826 reported incidents of TM incursion or aggressive behaviour since 2010:
  - 5 Involving firearms
  - 25 Violent attacks / assaults
  - 27 Attempted / successful Thefts or car jackings
  - 50 objects / liquids thrown
  - 53 Threats of violence or threatened with a weapon
  - 209 Verbal / Racial abuse (13 Racial)

The background of the slide is a photograph of a large suspension bridge at night. The bridge is illuminated with warm orange lights, and its reflection is visible in the calm water below. The sky is a deep blue with some clouds. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text "So what are we doing?".

**So what are we  
doing?**

# What are we doing to reduce violent incidents

- Using a Combination of approaches
  - Reporting culture
  - Conflict Management Training for Operatives
  - Technology – Cameras
  - Working with Police
  - Better Planning of work activity



A long-exposure photograph of a suspension bridge at night. The bridge's lights are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a mix of deep blue and purple hues. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title.

## Reporting culture

# Improved reporting culture

- Variety of campaigns
- Target Zero launched in 2012
  - Encouraged all staff to report all Health & Safety related incidents
  - Implemented better systems – Airsweb
  - Better analysis of data to identify trends and recurring themes
  - H&S Governance framework – Contract level steering groups and action groups
  - Balanced scorecards
  - Contract level improvement action plans and company wide targets



- Zero Code
  - Evolution of target zero
  - Introduction of work safe procedure; stop button and mantra of “If in doubt shout out”
  - Empowered all employees to stop work
- Local contract level initiatives to improve quality of reporting and encourage employees to report TM incursion and violence / abuse
  - “Get the Reg”
  - “Who Ya Gonna Call”
  - “Meet the Police”



If there's something strange in your neighbourhood....

# WHO YA GONNA CALL?



To reach local police from an Amey Mobile:

## Dial (9) then 101

- In serious cases, always **call 999**. Use the phrase "a crime has been committed"
- Always report abusive behaviour as a violence close call

**Report a close call: 0800 521660**

## HELP REDUCE ROADSIDE ABUSE.

# GET THE REG!

## Plates help the police

**We are working to tackle abuse towards road workers**

If we can provide data on incidents of violence, abuse, threats and nuisance behaviour, the police can help support our drive to stamp out roadside abuse.

- Always report abusive behaviour as a violence close call
- Whenever possible, note down the number plate
- In serious cases, always **call 999**. Use the phrase "a crime has been committed".

**Report a close call: 0800 521660**



# Meet our local police

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> February, 2pm – 3pm, TML**

PCSO Robbie Lea-Trengrouse from the Nechells Neighbourhood Policing Team will be visiting Thimble Mill Lane. This drop-in session an opportunity to get to know our local policing team, and discuss any concerns or issues you may have, including:

- Safe travel to and from the depot
- Crime prevention measures
- How best to report crimes and anti-social behaviour
- Information on what happens once a crime is reported
- What to do in an emergency situation

**Come along and say hello!**



The background of the slide is a photograph of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge at night. The bridge's suspension towers and cables are illuminated with warm orange lights, which are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a deep blue with some lighter, wispy clouds. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title text.

# **Conflict Management Training**





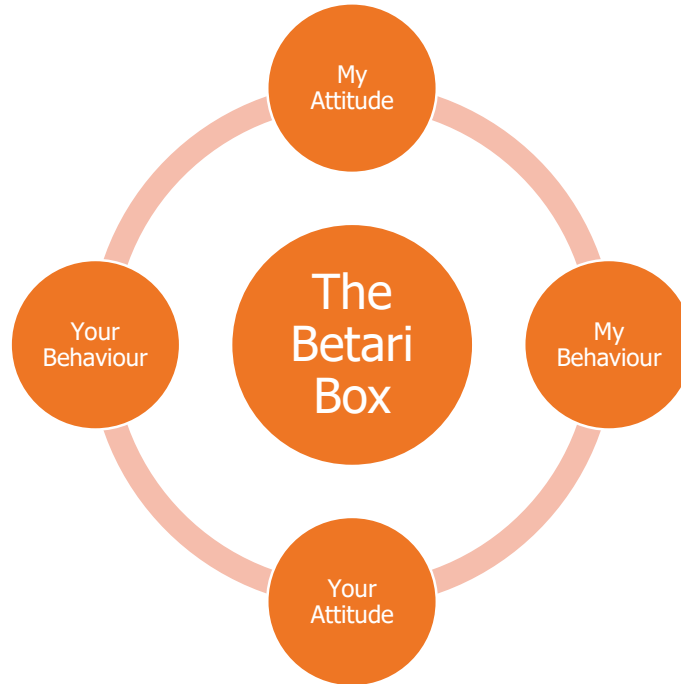
## Recognising aggression

It is unlikely for a person to suddenly become aggressive or violent without warning. Early warning signs include:

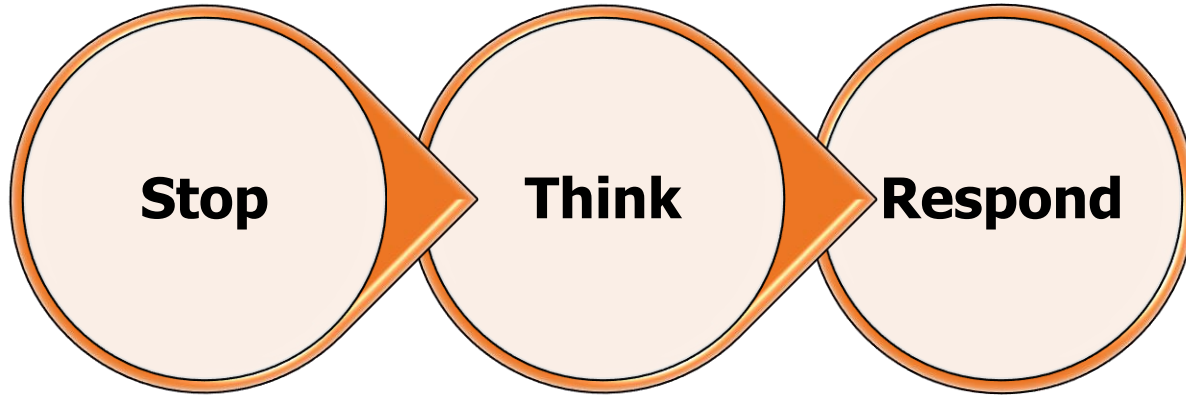
- loud speech
- muscle tension in the face, hands or limbs
- fidgeting, hand wringing, finger wagging or jabbing
- pacing, staring eyes, sweating, over sensitivity to what is being said
- rapid mood swing
- rapid unpredictable arm movements.

Recognise these warning signals and act on them to calm the situation before the aggression escalates into violence

# Behaviour breeds behaviour



**Think before you act**



# VERBAL DE-ESCALATION

- Self-Control
- Physical Presence
- De-escalating conversation

# SELF-CONTROL

- Appear calm and self-assured
- Use a low and level tone of voice
- Do not sound defensive
- Be respectful even when you are being forceful
- Be aware of back-up options:
  - Leaving
  - Telling the aggressor to leave
  - Calling for assistance
  - Calling the police



# PHYSICAL PRESENCE

- Never turn your back
- Stand at an angle
- Always stay at the same eye level
- Allow extra physical space between the two of you – about four times your usual distance
- Keep your hands out of your pockets, up and available to protect yourself
- Do not:
  - Maintain constant eye contact – allow the person to look away
  - Smile
  - Touch
  - Argue or try to convince
  - Be defensive or judgmental

# DE-ESCALATING CONVERSATION

- Speak calmly at an average volume
- Respond selectively – do not answer abusive questions
- Explain limits and rules in an authoritative, firm, but always respectful tone
- Empathise with the person's feelings, but not with their behaviour
- Move the conversation away from feelings towards thoughts
- Tell them the consequences of inappropriate behaviour
- Trust your instincts – if de-escalation is not working, stop and leave

# What you need to do

**Report ALL incidents of aggressive behaviour, violence (verbal or physical) or harassment as soon as possible to your Supervisor/Line Manager.**

...So we can help tackle them and take the appropriate action and ultimately reduce the number of incidents if **ALL** such incidents are reported.

## **Supervisors/Line Managers will:**

- Record the incident on AIRSweb and it will be investigated.
- Feedback will be provided to you on the outcome of the investigation and actions taken as a result.

**Note:** Employees have the right to report any incident they have been involved in to the police.



A photograph of the Golden Gate Bridge at dusk. The bridge's orange-red steel structure is illuminated with warm lights, which are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a mix of deep blue and purple hues, with some clouds. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title "Use of Technology".

## Use of Technology

# What we are doing

- Introducing Bodycams to operatives across Environmental Services Division
- Trialing use of Bodycams in Highways Division
- All Amey-owned RCVs and selected Traffic Management vehicles have been fitted with CCTV cameras to help protect and reduce the number of incidents of violence against our people
- Since fitting dashcams to TM vehicles – reduction in number of driving related incidents
- Vehicle telematics – location, speed, direction etc.





A long-exposure photograph of a suspension bridge at night. The bridge's lights are reflected in the calm water below. The sky is a mix of deep blue and purple hues. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the word "Planning".

# Planning

# Zero Code

- Simple work code that highlights the key actions we must all take to protect ourselves and others from harm
- Focus attention on encouraging and developing correct and safe behaviours
- Four principles
  - Ready to go - training, knowledge, information and instructions needed to work safely
  - Kitted out - right tools, equipment and clothing for the job
  - Stick to the plan - if anything changes with the plan, stop until a safe process is agreed
  - Stay Alert - be ready to react if a situation changes



# Planning our operations - Consider

- The area in which we are working:
  - Local communities and festivals
  - Existing intelligence gathered from previous incidents – e.g. Birmingham
  - Stop / Go or red light cameras at roadworks
    - Staffordshire
  - SafetyCam?
- Traffic management layouts:
  - Suitable and sufficient signage
  - Use of airlocks to prevent unauthorised access
  - Well signed diversion routes
  - Suitable retreat for gatemen



# Planning our operations - Consider

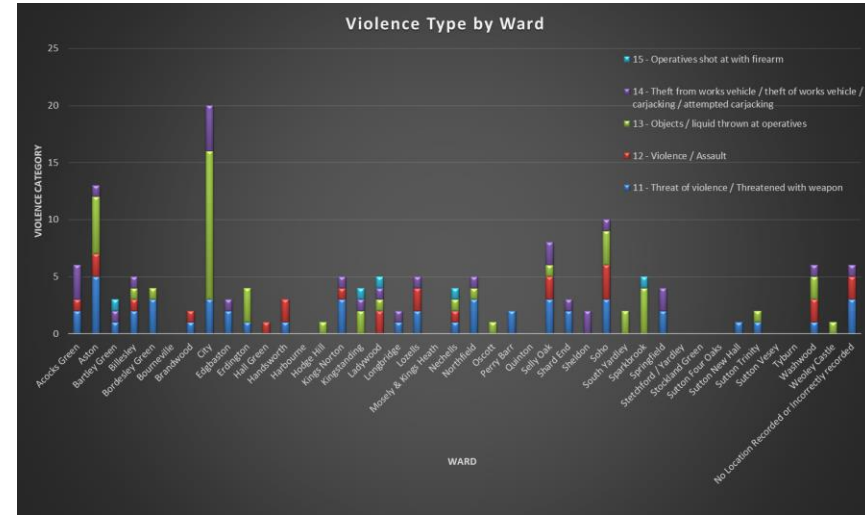
- Pedestrian routes – ease of access and clearly signed easy to follow routes
- Alternative parking and access for vehicles in urban areas
- Maintaining access to properties
- Good communication with local stakeholders
  - Informing residents and businesses well in advance of works to allow them to make alternative plans
  - Clear concise on site signage – especially where parking suspension required
- Noise
  - Minimise noisy operations in built up areas
  - Noisy activities e.g. planning complete before 23:00
  - White noise reversing alerts rather than beepers
  - Can it be done in the day?
- Key consideration - If this work was being done on my street how would it impact me and my family? What would I like to see being done to minimise disruption to me?

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## **Working with Police**

# Sharing data

- Engagement with local Police representatives to deal with local issues
- Sharing data = sharing intelligence mutual benefit
- “Get the Reg” campaign – have found that often vehicles breaching road closures are of interest to Police in their own enquiries
- If incidents do occur our operatives have already met the local Police and happier to share information
- Corporate support to enable individuals to report – can be done anonymously...allay fear of reprisal





# Police Action

- Generally unable to successfully prosecute on issues / incidents / events without specific evidence
- Need evidence to enable convictions:
  - CCTV / video footage
  - Good record of details:
    - Descriptions of individuals
    - Vehicle registrations
    - Location and time
    - Record of events
- Advice received around road closure breaches / violent acts:
  - It is a crime in progress potential threat to life
  - Should be treated as an emergency
  - Amey as an organisation are fully supportive of operatives calling emergency services in a genuine emergency and encourage them to do so
- Amey and other industry partners have successfully enabled prosecutions using this approach

# Any Questions?

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