

2006 Weapons in the Workplace

Survey Report

A Study by the Society for Human Resource Management





2006 Weapons in the Workplace

Survey Report

Amanda Benedict

Survey Research Specialist

SHRM Research

November 2006

This report is published by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM). All content is for informational purposes only and is not to be construed as a guaranteed outcome. The Society for Human Resource Management cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions or any liability resulting from the use or misuse of any such information.

© 2006 Society for Human Resource Management. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America.

This publication may not be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in whole or in part, in any form of by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the Society for Human Resource management, 1800 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA.

For more information, please contact:

SHRM Research Department
1800 Duke Street, Alexandria, VA 22314, USA
Phone: (703) 548-3440 Fax: (703) 535-6432
Web: www.shrm.org/research

2006 Weapons in the Workplace

Survey Report

Contents

v	About This Report
v	About SHRM
v	About SHRM Research
v	About the Author
vi	Acknowledgments
1	Introduction
3	Methodology
5	Key Findings
7	Survey Results
23	Conclusions
25	An HR Perspective
27	A Look Ahead
29	Demographics
31	SHRM Survey Reports

About This Report

In August 2006, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conducted the Weapons in the Workplace Survey, which asked HR professionals about the practices and policies that their organizations implemented to address the issue of employee-owned or acquired weapons in the workplace. HR professionals reported the types of weapons policies that their organizations had in place, how and why these policies were developed, the types of weapons that were included in the policies, the methods for communicating these policies to employees and other persons at the work site and the enforcement of these policies. This report presents an analysis of the 2006 SHRM Weapons in the Workplace Survey results and examines differences among organizations' weapons policies and practices according to organization staff size, employment sector and type of policy.

About SHRM

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 210,000 individual members, the Society's mission is to serve the needs of HR professionals by providing the most essential and comprehensive resources available. As an influential voice, the Society's mission is also to advance the human resource profession to ensure that HR is recognized

as an essential partner in developing and executing organizational strategy. Founded in 1948, SHRM currently has more than 550 affiliated chapters within the United States and members in more than 100 countries. Visit SHRM Online at www.shrm.org.

About SHRM Research

SHRM Research, as part of the Knowledge Development Division supporting SHRM, produces high-quality, leading-edge research and provides expertise on human resource and business issues. It acts as an advisor to SHRM for the purpose of advancing the HR profession and generates and publishes cutting-edge research used by human resource professionals to develop their knowledge and to provide strategic direction to their organizations. As leading experts in the field of HR, SHRM Research works closely with leading academics, policy makers and business leaders.

About the Author

Amanda Benedict is a survey research specialist for SHRM. Her responsibilities include designing, conducting and analyzing surveys on HR-related topics. She has worked in survey research for the past eight years.

Acknowledgments

This report is the culmination of a team effort. Steve Williams, Ph.D., SPHR, director of Research, provided valuable expertise adding to the content of the report. Mike Aitken, director of Governmental Affairs, and Kathleen Coulombe, state affairs specialist, provided valuable expertise adding to the content of the survey instrument and report. Nancy Lockwood, SPHR, GPHR, manager of HR Content Program, contributed by providing insight on practical application, and Jennifer Schramm, manager of the Workplace Trends and Forecasting Program, offered insight on future trends.

The Weapons in the Workplace Survey instrument was developed by the SHRM Survey Program. The SHRM Employee Health, Safety and Security Special Expertise Panel (specifically Thomas M. Anderson, SPHR, Philip S. Deming, SPHR, Paula H. Harvey, SPHR, Beth B. Hirsch, SPHR, Cindy Sue Koehn, SPHR, and Steven B. Uhrik), Employee Relations Special Expertise Panel (specifically Laura Lea Clinton, PHR, GPHR, Merry Lee Lison, SPHR, and Christine V. Walters, MAS, J.D., SPHR) and Labor Relations Special Expertise Panel (specifically Brenda M. Cossette, SPHR, James W. Gray and Kathleen Kelly Palmer), along with an internal committee of SHRM staff, provided valuable insight and recommendations for the survey instrument.

Introduction

Feeling safe in the workplace, including safety from threats of physical violence, is a major contributor to employee job satisfaction.¹

Numerous violent events in the workplace have received high-profile attention from the media, influencing employees' perceptions of safety and security in their own workplaces as well as their degree of concern about potential victimization while on the job. Although incidents of workplace violence, including those involving weapons, will never be eliminated completely, employers must take measures to address employee concerns and reduce their organizations' risk of liability by establishing workplace policies that promote safe working environments. And yet, several states have recently passed laws that restrict employers' ability to ban firearms from the workplace (e.g., Alaskan Statute 18.65.800, Kentucky Revised Statute 237.106), and several others have recently sponsored similar bills (e.g., Florida HB 129, Wisconsin SB 403 / AB 763).

How do employers balance demands for prevention of violence in the workplace with the pressure to allow employees to carry personally owned or acquired weapons on organization premises?

HR professionals contribute to their organizations' workplace safety through their involvement in developing policies that comply with legal requirements, educating employees about organizational policies and enforcing these policies. To gain an understanding of the efforts organizations undertake to ensure employee safety from weapons-related violence in the workplace, this report reviews the responses of HR professionals regarding organizational policies related to employee-owned or acquired weapons in the workplace, the items defined as weapons in these policies and organizational response to violations of these policies.

¹ Esen, E. (2006). *SHRM job satisfaction series: 2006 job satisfaction survey report*. Alexandria, VA: Society for Human Resource Management.

Methodology

A sample of HR professionals employed by companies within the United States was randomly selected from SHRM's membership database, which included approximately 210,000 individual members at the time the survey was conducted. Only members who had not participated in an SHRM survey or poll in the previous six months were included in the sampling frame. Members who were students, consultants, academics, located internationally or had no e-mail address on file were also excluded from the sampling frame. Beginning in August 2006, an e-mail that included a link to the Weapons in the Workplace Survey² was sent to 3,000 SHRM members. A total of 2,568 surveys were successfully delivered, and 495 HR professionals responded, yielding a response rate of 19%. The survey was fielded for a period of two weeks, and two e-mail reminders and one faxed reminder were sent to sample members in an effort to increase the response rate.

Notes and Caveats

Differences: Conventional statistical methods were used to determine if observed differences were statistically significant (i.e., there is a small likelihood that the differences occurred by chance). Therefore, in most cases, only results that were significant are included, unless otherwise noted.

Generalization of results: As with any research, readers should exercise caution when generalizing results and take individual circumstances and experiences into consideration when making decisions based on these data. While SHRM is confident in its research, it is prudent to understand that the results presented in this survey report are only truly representative of the sample of HR professionals responding to the survey.

Number of respondents: The number of respondents (indicated by "n" in figures and tables) varies from table to table and figure to figure because some respondents did not answer all of the questions. Individuals may not have responded to a question on the survey because the question or some of its parts were not applicable or because the requested data were unavailable. This also accounts for the varying number of responses within each table or figure.

Confidence level and margin of error: A confidence level and margin of error give readers some measure of how much they can rely on survey responses to represent all of SHRM members. Given the level of response to the survey, SHRM is 99% confident that responses given by all respondents can be generalized to all SHRM members with a margin of error of approximately 1%. For example, 64% of HR professionals reported that their organizations had formal

² The survey instrument is available upon request by contacting the SHRM Survey Program at surveys@shrm.org or by phone at 703-535-6301.

weapons policies. With a 1% margin of error, the reader can be 99% certain that between 63% and 65% of SHRM members would report that their organizations currently have formal weapons policies. It is important to know that as the sample size decreases,

the margin of error increases, and therefore the margin of error for each individual question will vary depending on the number of responses to that particular question.

Key Findings

Overall, nearly all HR professionals felt that employers should be allowed to restrict firearms in the workplace in some or all cases.

More than three-quarters of organizations had either formal or informal weapons policies in place. Nearly one-quarter of organizations did not have weapons policies, but over one-quarter of these organizations intended to create weapons policies in the next 12 months. The vast majority of organizations with offices in multiple states had the same weapons policy across their locations. Organization staff size, sector and regional location had an effect on organizations' likelihood of having weapons policies or plans to create them.

More than nine out of 10 respondents indicated that HR had been involved in their organizations' weapons policies. Of these respondents, the largest proportion reported taking part in developing these policies, followed by educating employees about their organizations' weapons policies and determining the need to create weapons policies.

The majority of respondents indicated that their organizations' decisions about their weapons policies were influenced to a great degree by the desire to take preventive measures against workplace violence. A small proportion responded that their

weapons policies were influenced to a great degree by previously occurred safety or security incidents in their workplace, suggesting that most organizations develop weapons policies proactively rather than as a response to weapons-related incidents in the workplace.

More than three-quarters of organizations have not changed their weapons policies in the past 24 months. Less than one-tenth of organizations were compelled to make changes to their weapons policies due to state or local legislation.

Most organizations reported that they specifically did not permit any weapons at all. Other organizations did not permit selected weapons, including barreled firearms and handguns. Of the organizations that permitted weapons in designated areas of their organizations' premises, the largest proportion allowed weapons to be kept in employee vehicles in the organizations' parking areas.

Organizations used multiple formats to communicate their weapons policies, including placing their weapons policies in the employee handbook, discussing their weapons policies during the new-employee orientation and posting their weapons policies on their company's intranet or other electronic medium. A small percentage of organizations reported methods

of communicating their weapons policies that were visible to nonemployees, such as posting their weapons policies at the entrance to parking areas.

Organizations reported a low average degree of difficulty in enforcing weapons policies among various groups (i.e., employees, senior management, customers and/or patrons). The vast majority of organizations had documented disciplinary procedures for violations of their weapons policies. More than one-half indicated that their organizations responded or would respond to weapons policy violations with zero tolerance, i.e., immediate termination of employees. Approximately one-quarter of organizations reported that they had or would issue a written warning to employees for a first violation of their weapons policies. More than one-tenth of organizations acknowledged that they had no set disciplinary response to violations of their weapons policies. About two-thirds of organizations reported that HR had the responsibility for confronting employees who were not in compliance with the weapons policies. About one-quarter of organizations reported that they had experienced employee noncompliance with their weapons policies.

Nearly one-half of organizations with formal weapons policies had documented emergency plans in the event of a workplace weapons incident, whereas less than one-quarter of organizations with informal weapons policies had such emergency plans.

The majority of organizations investigated the background of potential employees. Of the organizations that conducted or required background investigations, nearly all conducted criminal background checks, three-quarters checked references and almost the same proportion checked potential employees' previous work histories. Of the organizations that had employees who were required to carry weapons as a function of their job duties, three out of five required additional background investigations for potential employees who would be required to carry weapons. (For more information on background and reference checking conducted by organizations for potential new employees, see the *SHRM 2004 Reference and Background Checking Survey Report*.)

Survey Results

Prevalence of Weapons Policies in the Workplace

Organizations are taking precautions to reduce the risk of workplace violence by implementing policies outlining their expectations of employee behavior related to weapons in the workplace. Overall, more than three-quarters of HR professionals reported that their organizations had either formal (i.e., written) or informal weapons policies in place: nearly two-thirds (64%) of respondents indicated that their organizations had formal written weapons policies, and an additional 13% reported that their organizations had informal weapons policies (Figure 1). Sixteen percent of respondents indicated that their organizations did not have weapons policies and had no plans to create such policies; however, 6% responded while that their organizations currently had no weapons policies, they intended to create them in the next 12 months. There were no HR professionals who responded that their organizations had recently eliminated their weapons policies.

Organization staff size had an effect on the likelihood of having weapons policies. Large-staff-sized (500+ employees) organizations (86%) were more likely than small-staff-sized (1-99 employees) or medium-staff-sized (100-499 employees) organizations to report having a formal written weapons policy, and medium organizations (63%) were more likely than small organizations (47%) to report having a formal written weapons policy. Small organizations (14%) were more likely

than medium organizations (5%) or large organizations (2%) to indicate that their organizations intended to create a weapons policy within the next 12 months. Small organizations (27%) were also more likely than large organizations (7%) to respond that their organizations had no plans to create a weapons policy. These data are shown in Table 1.

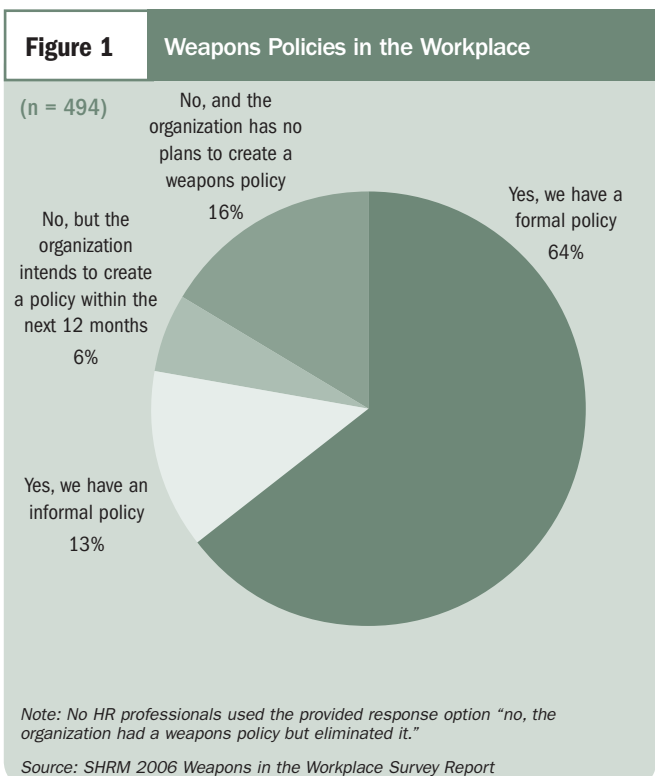


Table 1 Weapons Policies in the Workplace (by Organization Staff Size)

	Small (1 - 99 Employees) (n = 131)	Medium (100 - 499 Employees) (n = 162)	Large (500+ Employees) (n = 83)	Differences by Organization Staff Size
Yes, we have a formal policy	47%	63%	86%	Medium > small Large > small, medium
Yes, we have an informal policy	12%	15%	5%	
No, but the organization intends to create a policy within the next 12 months	14%	5%	2%	Small > medium, large
No, and the organization has no plans to create a weapons policy	27%	17%	7%	Small > large

Note: The sample sizes and percentages shown in the organization staff size categories are based on the actual number of respondents who provided their number of employees and information about their organizations' weapons policies. Blank cells in the last column indicate that no statistically significant differences were found.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

Table 2 Weapons Policies in the Workplace (by Organization Sector)

	Publicly Owned For-Profit Organization (n = 83)	Privately Owned For-Profit Organization (n = 212)	Nonprofit Organization (n = 57)	Government Agency (n = 22)	Other (n = 10)	Differences by Sector
Yes, we have a formal policy	78%	55%	70%	55%	80%	Publicly owned for-profit organization > privately owned for-profit organization
Yes, we have an informal policy	4%	14%	12%	14%	20%	
No, but the organization intends to create a policy within the next 12 months	4%	8%	5%	18%	0%	
No, and the organization has no plans to create a weapons policy	14%	23%	12%	14%	0%	

Note: The sample sizes and percentages shown in the organization sector categories are based on the actual number of respondents who provided organization sector and information about their organizations' weapons policies. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding. Blank cells in the last column indicate that no statistically significant differences were found. Organizations that self-identified as "other" organization sector included educational services, among others.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

Organization sector also had an effect on the likelihood of having a formal written weapons policy. Respondents employed by publicly owned for-profit organizations (78%) were more likely than those employed by privately owned for-profit organizations (55%) to report that their organizations had formal written weapons policies (Table 2).

Regional location within the United States³ also had an effect on organizations' likelihood of having weapons policies (Table 3). Respondents from organizations located in the Midwest (74%) were more likely than those from organizations located in the Northeast (50%) or the South (56%) to report that their organizations had formal written weapons policies. By contrast, respondents from organizations in

³ The list of states that comprise the region categories is located on page 30 in the Census Region table.

Table 3 Weapons Policies in the Workplace (by Region)

	Northeast (n = 64)	South (n = 91)	Midwest (n = 137)	West (n = 87)	Differences by Region
Yes, we have a formal policy	50%	56%	74%	61%	Midwest > Northeast, South
Yes, we have an informal policy	13%	11%	12%	11%	
No, but the organization intends to create a policy within the next 12 months	11%	11%	4%	7%	
No, and the organization has no plans to create a weapons policy	27%	22%	11%	21%	Northeast > Midwest

Note: The sample sizes and percentages shown in the region categories are based on the actual number of respondents who provided their zip codes and information about their organizations' weapons policies. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding. Blank cells in the last column indicate that no statistically significant differences were found.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

Table 4 Weapons Policies in the Workplace (by Staff Unionization)

	Organizations With Unionized Staff (n = 71)	Organizations Without Unionized Staff (n = 309)
Yes, we have a formal policy	69%	61%
Yes, we have an informal policy	11%	12%
No, but the organization intends to create a policy within the next 12 months	8%	7%
No, and the organization has no plans to create a weapons policy	11%	20%

Note: The sample sizes and percentages shown in the staff unionization categories are based on the actual number of respondents who answered the staff unionization item and provided information about their organizations' weapons policies. Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding. No statistically significant differences were found.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

the Northeast (27%) were more likely than those in the Midwest (11%) to report that their organizations did not have weapons policies and did not intend to create weapons policies.

Differences in workplace weapons policies by organization size, sector and region may be partially explained by the dynamics of the organizations and their employees. For example, organizations with very few employees (i.e., those included in the small-staff-sized category) may not perceive a need to establish

either a formal or informal weapons policy if they don't feel that weapons in the workplace are a likely concern for their organizations. Other organizations may decide against creating weapons policies if many of their employees participate in their regions' hunting seasons and keep weapons used for hunting in employee-owned vehicles during those times.

There were no significant differences among organizations with and without unionized staff in relation

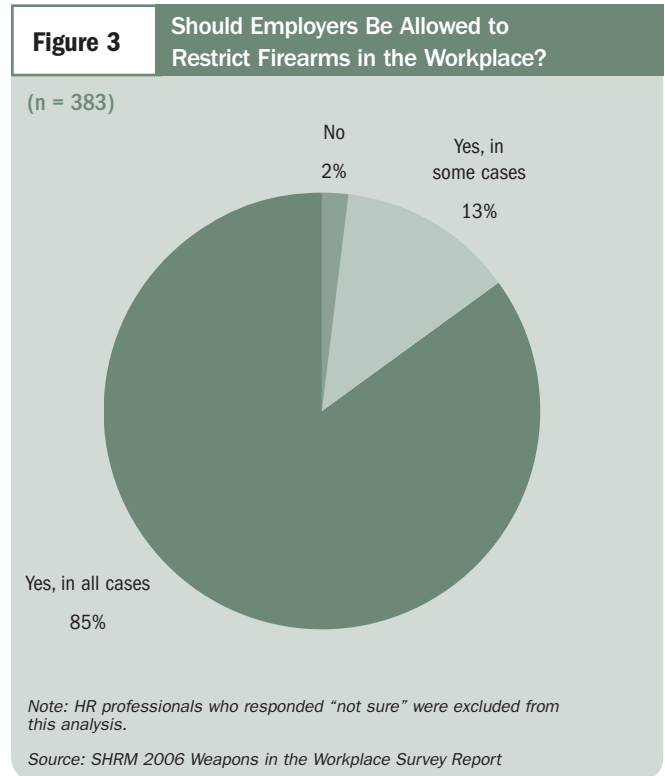
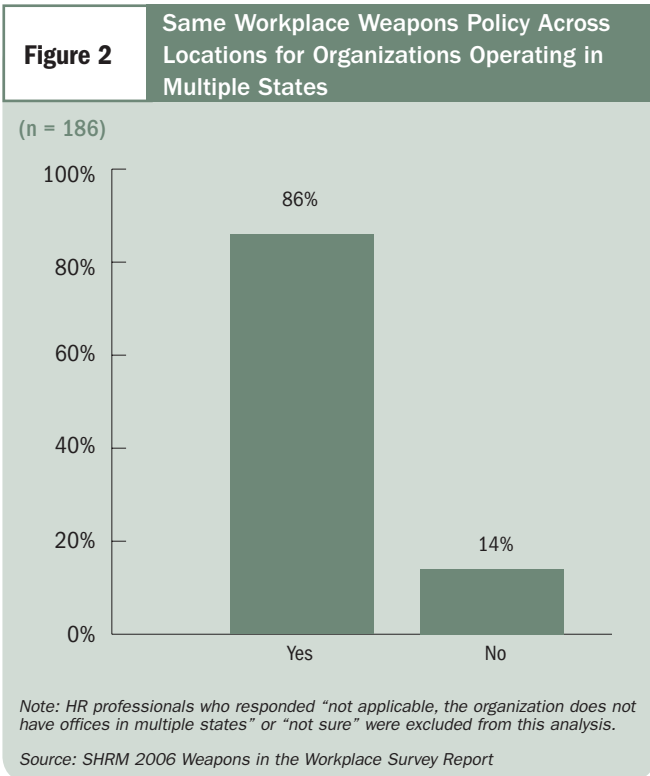


Table 5 Should Employers Be Allowed to Restrict Firearms in the Workplace? (by Weapons Policy)

	Formal Policy (n = 244)	Informal Policy (n = 42)	No, but Intends to Create a Policy (n = 27)	No, and Has No Plans to Create a Policy (n = 69)
Yes, in all cases	86%	86%	81%	81%
Yes, in some cases	12%	12%	19%	14%
No	1%	2%	0%	4%

Note: The overall sample size is based on the total number of responses to this question; however, not all respondents provided information about their weapons policies. Therefore, the sample sizes and percentages in the weapons policy columns are based on the actual number of respondents who responded to both items. HR professionals who responded "not sure" were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

to their likelihood of having weapons policies in the workplace (Table 4).

Among HR professionals employed by organizations that had offices or work sites in multiple states, 86% indicated that their organizations had the same weapons policy across locations (Figure 2).

This includes respondents who indicated that their locations did not have weapons policies at all. This finding indicates that the majority of organizations with multiple locations have made a single weapons policy decision for their entire organization rather than making weapons policy decisions at the work-site level.

HR Professionals’ Perspectives and Involvement in Workplace Weapons Policies

When asked their professional opinions, 85% of respondents indicated that employers should be allowed to restrict firearms in the workplace in all cases (Figure 3). An additional 13% indicated that employers should be allowed to restrict weapons in the workplace in some cases. Interestingly, there were no differences between HR professionals from organizations with formal weapons policies, those with informal policies and those without weapons policies in their responses to this survey item (Table 5).

Among respondents from organizations with weapons policies in place, only 9% indicated that HR had not been involved in any capacity with their organizations’ weapons policies. Those who reported that HR was involved in their organizations’ weapons policies indicated that HR involvement took a variety of roles. The largest proportion, 71%, indicated that HR has been involved in developing their organizations’ weapons

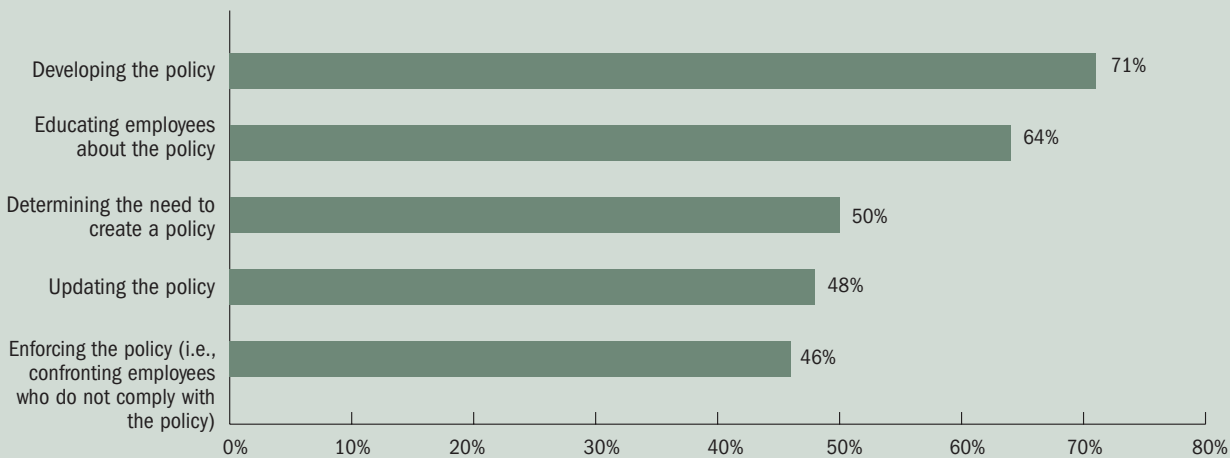
policies, almost two-thirds (64%) reported that HR educated employees about their organizations’ weapons policies, and one-half (50%) reported that HR was involved in determining the need to create weapons policies. Slightly smaller proportions of respondents (48% and 46%, respectively) reported that their organizations’ HR had been involved in updating weapons policies or confronting noncompliant employees, which may reflect the low incidences of change to established weapons policies and noncompliance with the weapons policies. These data are depicted in Figure 4.

Context and Content of Workplace Weapons Policies

An organization’s decision regarding a weapons policy may be influenced to varying degrees by concerns from within the organization, as well as external factors. Among HR professionals whose organizations had weapons policies, the largest proportion (84%) reported that decisions about weapons policies were influenced to a great degree by the desire to take

Figure 4 HR Involvement in Organization’s Weapons Policy

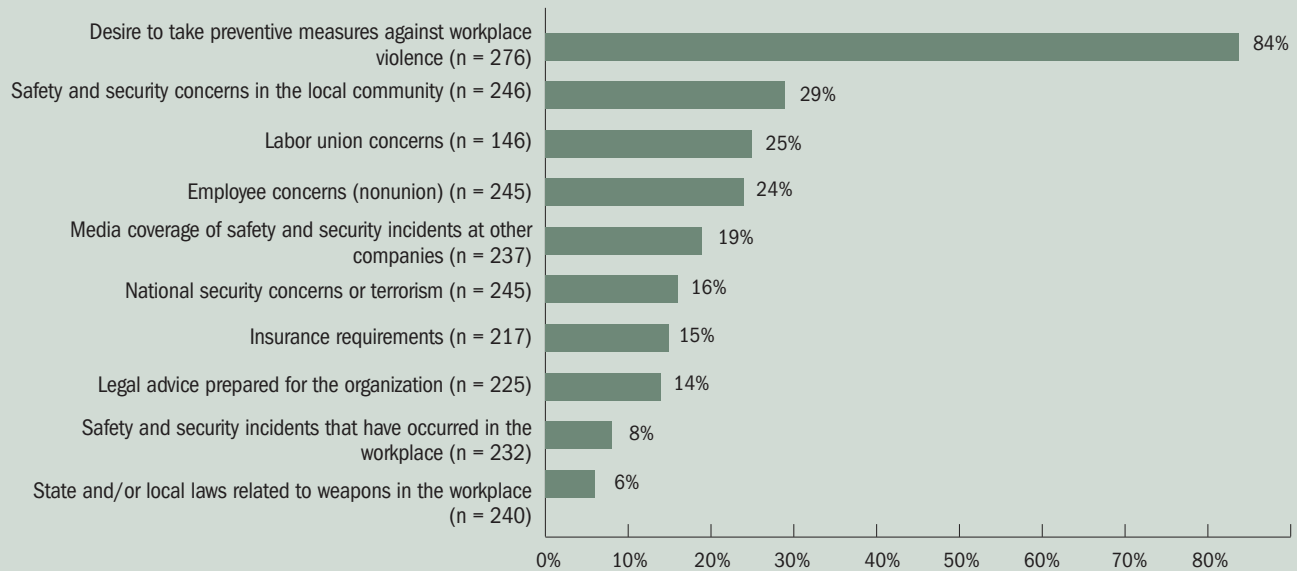
(n = 258)



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options. HR professionals who responded "not applicable, HR has not been involved" and those without a weapons policy were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

Figure 5 Factors Influencing Decisions about Weapons Policies



Note: Data sorted in descending order. Includes responses of "a great degree." HR professionals who responded "not applicable" or "not sure" to each item or reported that their organizations did not have weapons policies were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

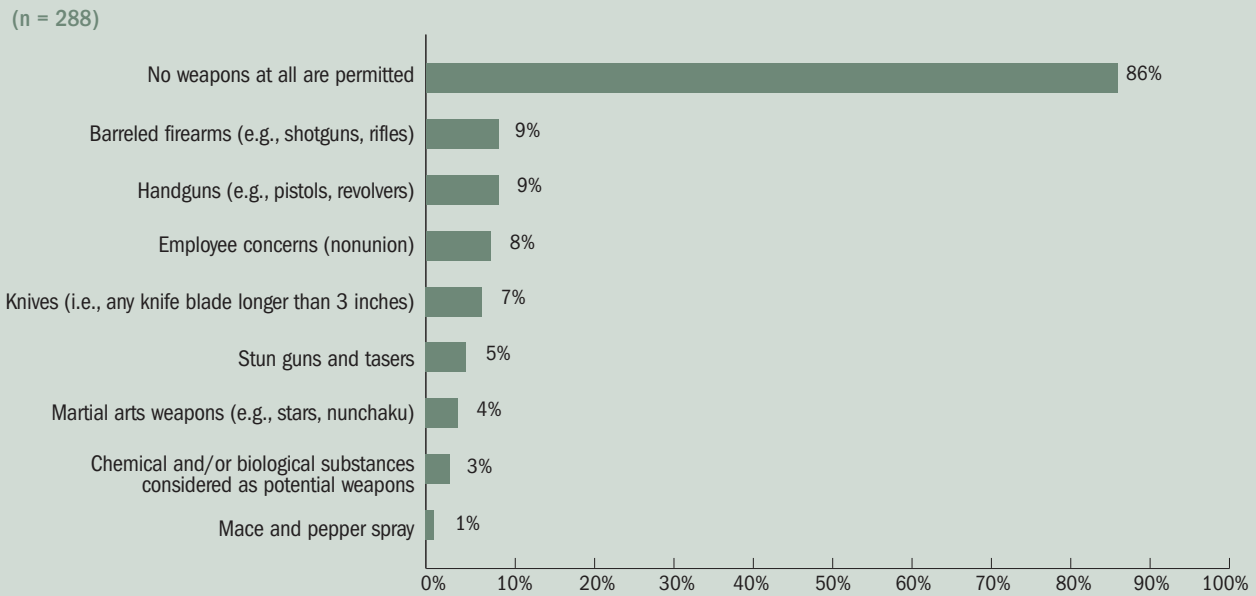
preventive measures against workplace violence. Safety and security concerns in the community had a great degree of influence in weapons policy decisions in 29% of organizations. One-quarter (25%) reported that labor union concerns influenced their organizations' weapons policy decisions to a great degree, and 24% reported that their organizations' weapons policy decisions were influenced to a great degree by employee concerns. These data are shown in Figure 5.

HR professionals were asked which weapons were specifically not permitted by their organizations' weapons policies. The overwhelming majority (86%) responded that no weapons at all were permitted by their organizations, meaning that their organizations' weapons policies applied to all objects and agents that could be considered as weapons. Nine percent responded that their organizations' weapons policies specifically did not permit barreled firearms such as shotguns and rifles, and another 9% reported that

handguns such as pistols or revolvers were specifically not permitted by their organizations' weapons policies (Figure 6). With one exception, all of the respondents who indicated that barreled firearms were not permitted also reported that handguns were not permitted. This suggests that most organizations view firearms as a single category of weapons subject to the same weapons policy.

According to respondents from organizations with formal written weapons policies, 51% included specific language pertaining to licensed or concealed firearms in their policies (Figure 7). This language may be to inform those subject to the policy (i.e., employees, visitors to the work site) that licensed or concealed firearms are excluded from the organization's weapons policy, or it may be to clarify that the weapons policy is inclusive of licensed or concealed firearms. HR professionals were asked where employee-owned weapons—that is, weapons that were not issued by

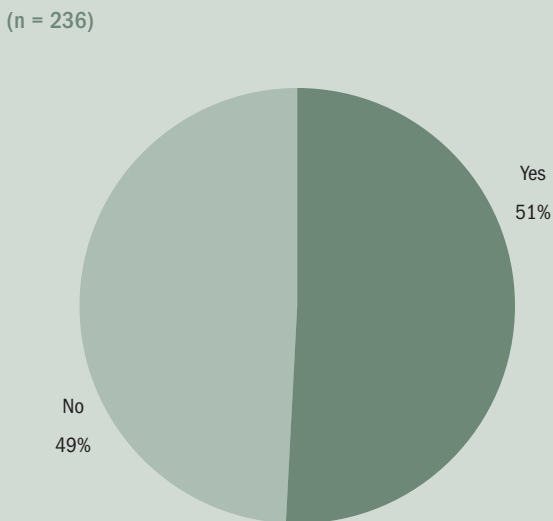
Figure 6 Weapons Specifically Not Permitted by Organization's Weapons Policy



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options. The response category "no weapons at all are permitted by my organization" was considered exclusive of other response categories. HR professionals who reported that their organizations did not have a weapons policy were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

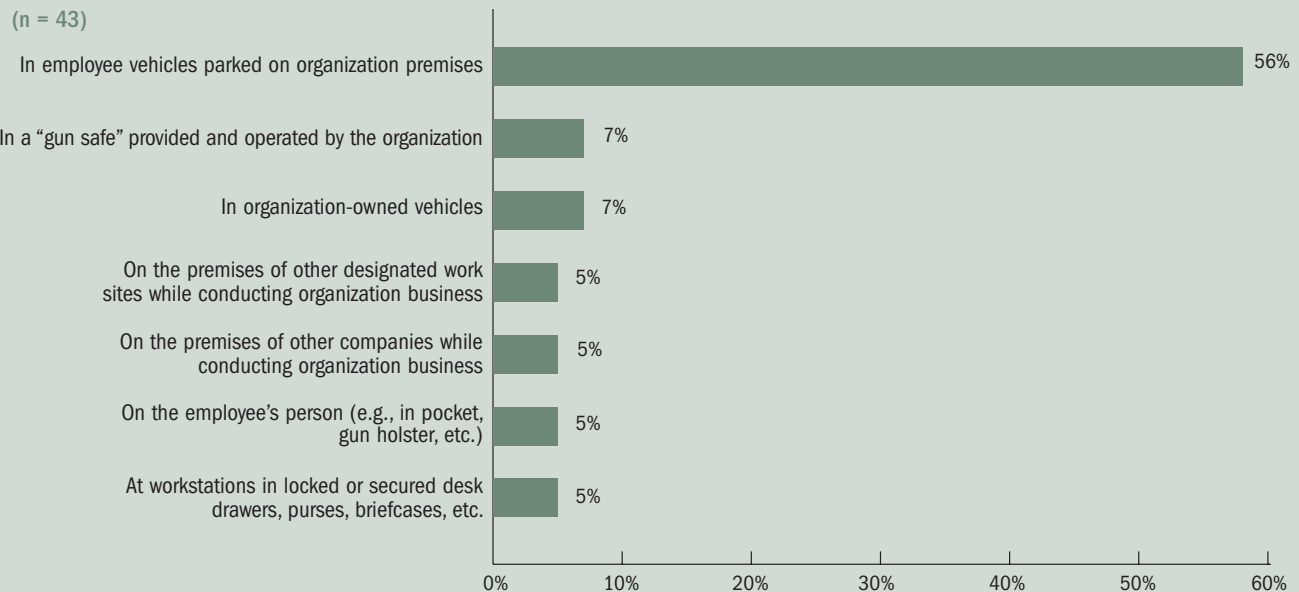
Figure 7 Formal Written Weapons Policy Includes Specific Language About Licensed or Concealed Firearms



Note: HR professionals from organizations without a formal weapons policy and those who responded "not sure" to this item were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

the employer or required as a function of the job—were permitted at their organizations. Nearly nine out of 10 responded that employee-owned weapons were not permitted anywhere on organization premises. A small percentage of respondents, only 11%, reported that their organizations permitted employee-owned or acquired weapons on organization premises. Of this small number, more than one-half (56%) indicated that such weapons were allowed in employee vehicles parked on organization premises, 7% provided a gun safe for storing employee-owned weapons brought onto company premises, and 7% permitted employee-owned weapons in organization vehicles. According to respondents, only 5% of organizations that permitted employee-owned weapons on organization premises allowed these weapons to be kept at workstations, on the employee's person, at other designated work sites or on the premises of other companies while conducting organization business (Figure 8).

Figure 8**Areas Where Employee-Owned Weapons Are Permitted on Organization's Premises**

Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options. Only HR professionals who indicated that their organizations permitted employees to have personally owned or acquired weapons on organization premises were included in this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

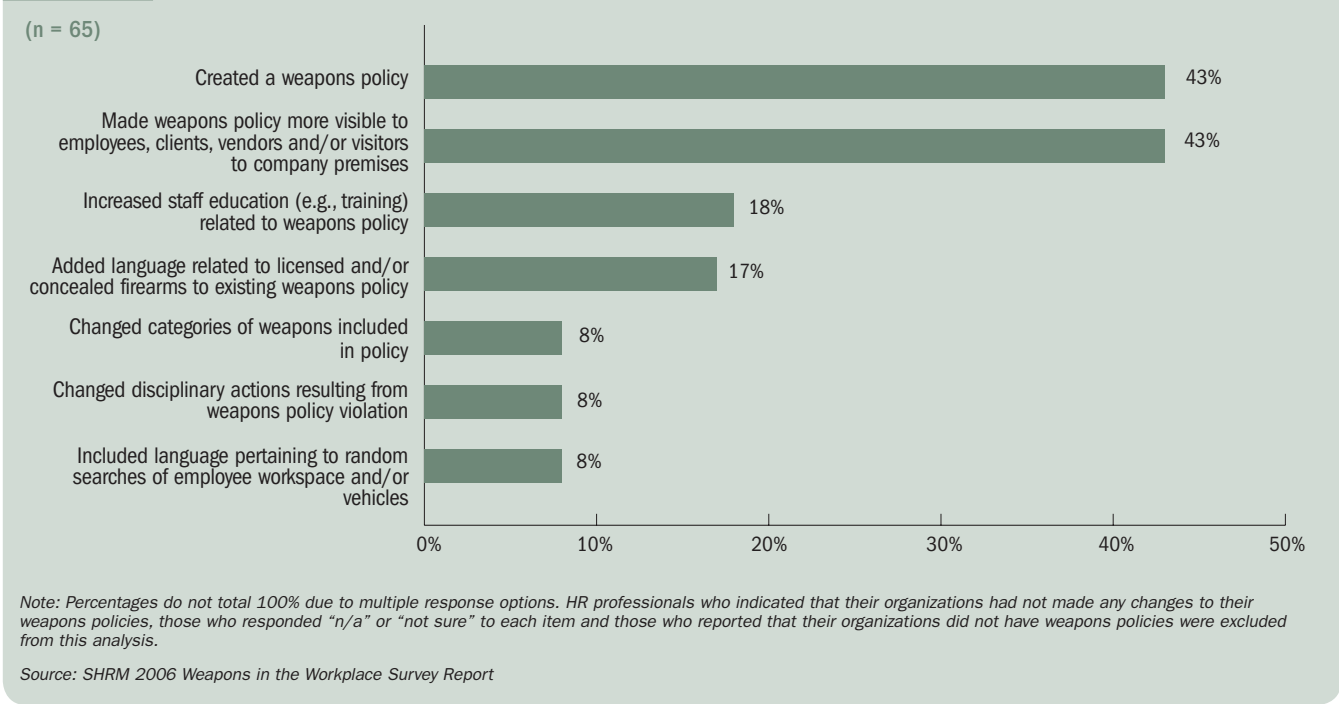
Most organizations have not needed to update or modify their weapons policies recently. More than three-quarters (77%) of HR professionals reported that their organizations had not made changes to their weapons policies during the previous 24 months. Among respondents from organizations that had made changes to their organizations' weapons policies during that time period, 43% reported that their organizations had created their weapons policy during the 24 months prior to the survey, possibly reflecting both new organizations creating boilerplate HR policies and mature organizations determining for the first time the need for a weapons policy.

Forty-three percent of HR professionals whose organizations had made changes to their weapons policies reported that they made their weapons policies more visible to clients, vendors and/or visitors to company premises. Less than one-fifth of respondents reported that their organizations increased

staff education related to their weapons policies (18%) or added language pertaining to licensed and/or concealed firearms to existing weapons policies (17%). Eight percent of respondents each reported that their organizations changed the categories of weapons included in existing weapons policies, changed disciplinary actions resulting from weapons policy violations or included language pertaining to random searches of employee workspaces or vehicles. These data are depicted in Figure 9.

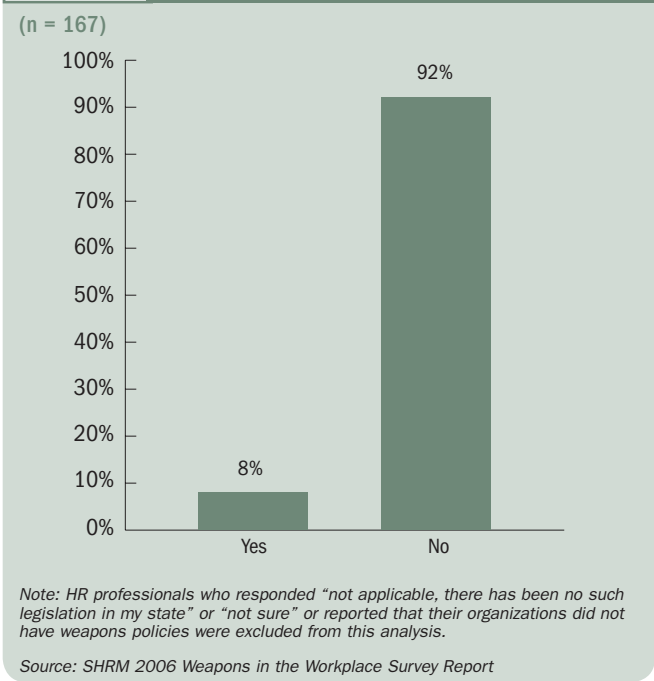
Although a handful of states (Alaska, Kentucky, Minnesota, Mississippi and Oklahoma) have recently passed laws challenging employers' ability to restrict employee-owned or acquired firearms on company premises and lawmakers in several other states (Florida, Indiana, Virginia and Wisconsin) have sponsored similar bills, very few organizations have found it necessary to revise their weapons policies as a result of these legislative efforts. According to HR

Figure 9 Changes to Weapons Policy During Previous 24 Months



professionals, only 8% of organizations made changes to their weapons policies during the previous 24 months due to state and/or local legislation restricting employers' ability to ban firearms from the workplace (Figure 10). This proportion may increase if more bills of this nature are voted into laws and employers are compelled to revise their workplace weapons policies. Of the small number of respondents who reported changes to their weapons policies due to recent state or local legislation, the largest proportion indicated that their organizations made their weapons policies more visible to employees, clients, vendors and/or visitors to company premises (57%) and added language related to licensed and/or concealed firearms to their existing weapons policies (43%).

Figure 10 Has State or Local Legislation Necessitated Changes to Organization's Weapons Policy?



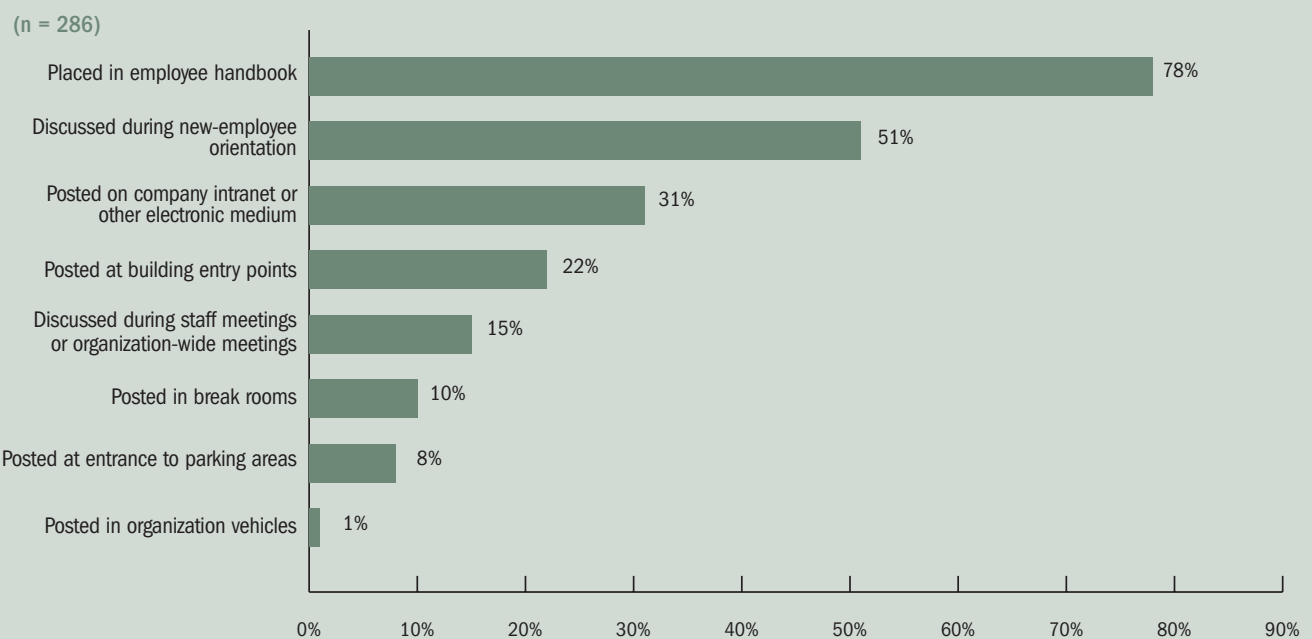
Communication and Enforcement of Workplace Weapons Policies

Organizations communicate their weapons policies through a variety of methods, often using multiple formats to communicate the policies. According to respondents, the largest percentage of organizations (78%) placed their weapons policies in the employee handbooks. Slightly more than one-half (51%) reported that their organizations' weapons policies were discussed during new-employee orientation. Nearly one-third (31%) of respondents indicated that their organizations posted their weapons policies on the company intranet or other electronic medium. Only 8% of HR professionals reported that their organizations posted their weapons policies at the entrance to parking areas, which may be reflective either of organizations not including parking areas as areas subject to their weapons policies or of organizations permitting employees to store their weapons in their

vehicles while parked on organization premises. These data are shown in Figure 11. It is worth noting that some of the response options provided may not have applied to all respondents. For example, organizations that did not own or control their work sites or parking areas may not have had the authority to post their weapons policies in these areas and therefore would not have been able to communicate their weapons policies in these ways. Similarly, only organizations with company vehicles would have been able to communicate their weapons policies by posting them in the vehicles.

According to HR professionals, organizations with weapons policies have had little difficulty enforcing them (Table 6). However, in the absence of a clear violation of weapons policies, difficulty in enforcing the policies may not be apparent.

Figure 11 How Workplace Weapons Policy is Communicated



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options. HR professionals who reported that their organizations did not have weapons policies were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

Table 6 Average Degree of Difficulty in Enforcing Weapons Policies Among Various Groups

	Mean
On-site employees (n = 253)	1.14
Customers and patrons (n = 244)	1.12
Visitors (e.g., guests of employees) (n = 243)	1.11
Contract employees/temporary workers working on company premises (n = 248)	1.09
Roaming employees (i.e., employees who travel to other designated work sites or organizations) (n = 246)	1.08
Vendors/suppliers (n = 244)	1.08
Senior management (n = 251)	1.04

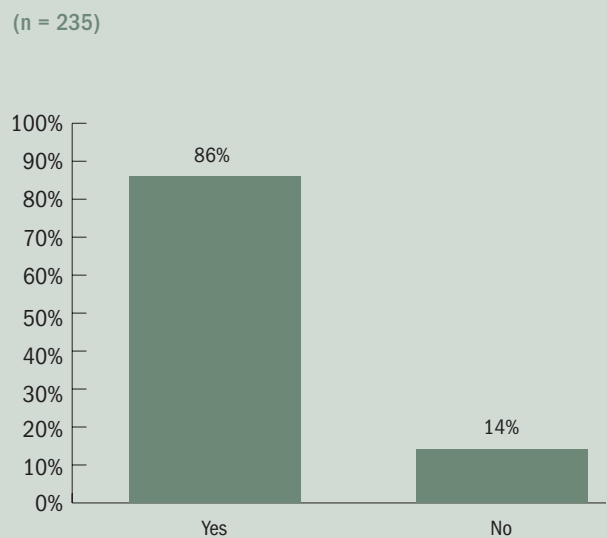
Note: Sample sizes and averages are based on the total number of HR professionals who provided responses for each item. Average ratings are based on a scale where 1 = "not at all" and 4 = "a great degree" (higher averages indicate greater degree of difficulty). HR professionals who responded "n/a" or "not sure" to each item or reported that their organizations did not have weapons policies were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

How do organizations respond to violations of their weapons policies? Among HR professionals from organizations with formal weapons policies, 86% have documented disciplinary procedures for violations (Figure 12). More than one-half (52%) of HR professionals reported that their organizations had a zero-tolerance policy for violations of their weapons policies, meaning that any violation by an employee would result in immediate termination (Figure 13). Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) indicated that employees received written warnings for first violations, and 16% indicated that employees may be suspended without pay following a weapons policy violation. Fourteen percent reported that their organizations had no set procedures for responding to violations of their weapons policies. Several HR professionals commented that their organizations' responses would depend on the circumstances of the violation of their weapons policies.

According to HR professionals, responsibility for confronting employees who do not comply with organizations' weapons policies tends to be shared across departments or levels within organizations

Figure 12 Documented Disciplinary Procedures for Violations of Weapons Policy



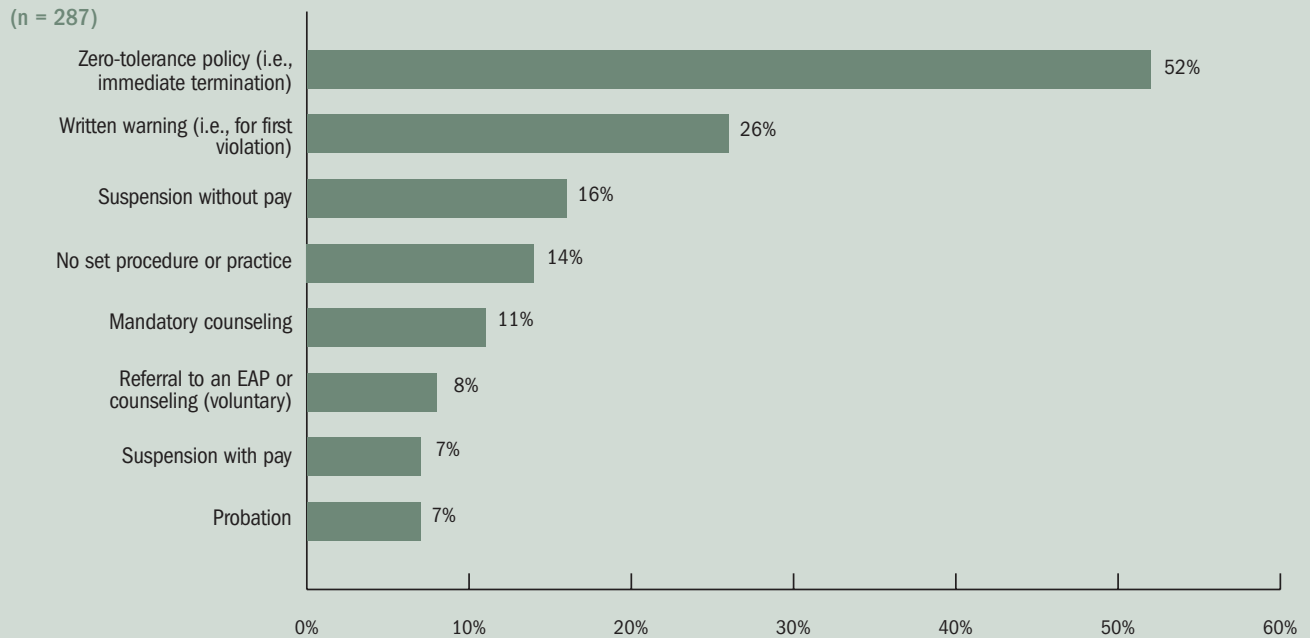
Note: Includes only HR professionals from organizations with formal weapons policies and excludes those who responded "not sure" to this item.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

(Figure 14). Almost two-thirds (64%) of respondents indicated that their organizations' HR department was responsible for confronting employees who did not comply with the organizations' weapons policies, 51% reported that senior management or the executive team within the organization was responsible, and 47% reported that it was the responsibility of the direct supervisor to confront noncompliant employees. The smallest percentage (3%) indicated that their organizations' general counsel or staff attorney had responsibility for confronting noncompliant employees.

Workplace weapons policies extend beyond confirmed violations and also establish procedures for handling suspected violations of the weapons policy. More than three-quarters (77%) of HR professionals responded that their organizations did or would conduct searches of employees' personal belongings (i.e., purses, briefcases, gym bags, jackets) and/or

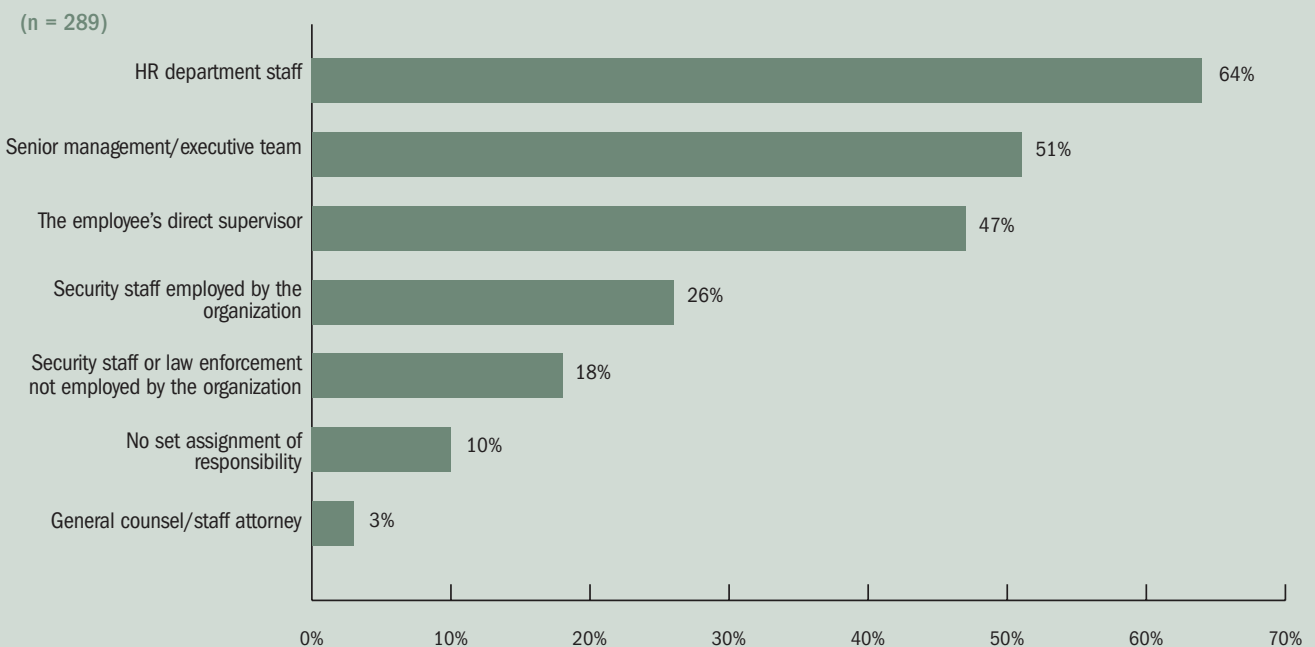
Figure 13 Responses to Violations of Organization's Weapons Policy



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options. HR professionals from organizations without weapons policies were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

Figure 14 Responsibility for Confronting Employees Who Do Not Comply With Organization's Weapons Policy



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to multiple response options. HR professionals without a weapons policy were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report

vehicles in the event of a workplace weapons concern (Figure 15).

Further, some organizations have weapons policies that outline emergency procedures in the event of a workplace weapons incident. Organizations with formal weapons policies (47%) were nearly twice as likely as those with informal weapons policies (24%) to have documented emergency plans in case of weapons incidents in the workplace (Table 7). Some organizations may have a catch-all crisis plan that includes emergencies due to weapons in the workplace, rather than an emergency plan specifically related to a potential weapons incident.

Slightly more than one-quarter (26%) of respondents reported that their organizations had experienced employee noncompliance with their organizations' weapons policies (Figure 16).

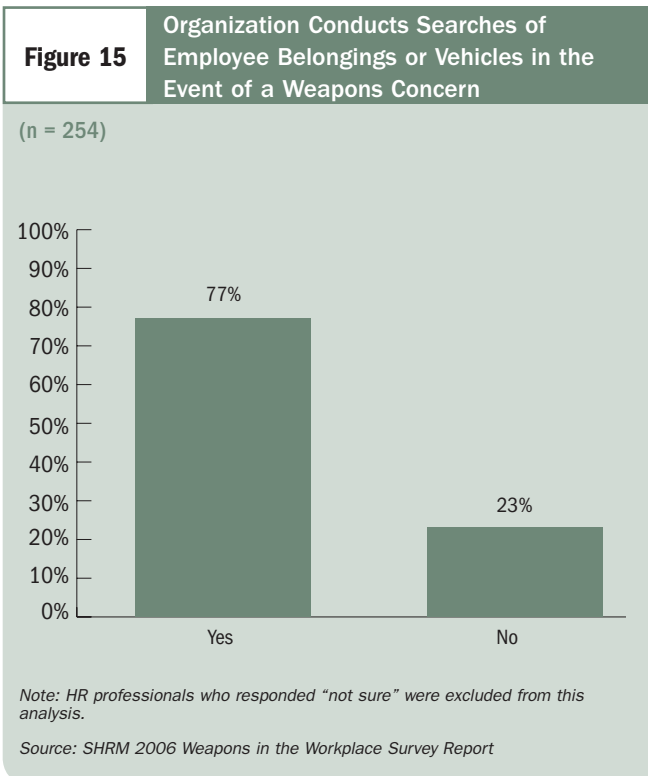
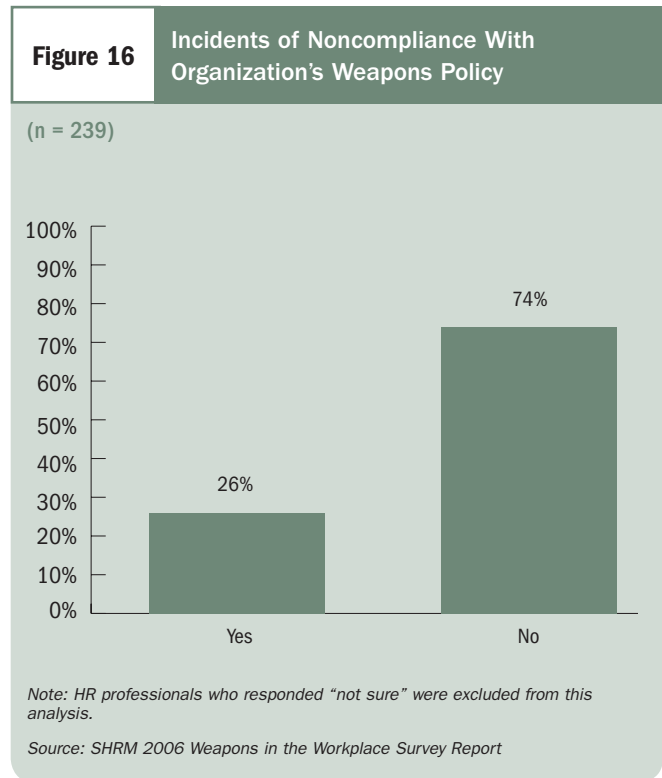


Table 7 Documented Emergency Plan in Case of Workplace Weapons Incident (by Weapons Policy)

	Formal Policy (n = 204)	Informal Policy (n = 34)	Differences by Weapons Policy
Yes	47%	24%	Formal policy > informal policy

Note: HR professionals who responded "not sure" or did not have a weapons policy were excluded from this analysis.

Source: SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report



Risk Reduction Through Potential Employee Background Investigations

Workplace weapons policies are important for reducing risk of violence in the workplace by setting behavioral expectations for established employees. Another commonly employed method to reduce potential risk is through conducting background investigations of potential employees. Eighty-five percent of respondents reported that their organizations conducted or hired outside agencies to conduct

background investigations of potential employees. Of the organizations that performed background investigations, nearly all (96%) reported using criminal background checks. (This finding is consistent with the results of the *SHRM 2004 Reference and Background Checking Survey Report*.) Slightly more than three-quarters (76%) of respondents reported that their organizations checked references, and nearly three-quarters (73%) reported checking potential employees' previous work histories. Less commonly used forms of background investigations included checking military discharge information (19%) and searching government agency records (9%). Of respondents from organizations that required employees to carry weapons on the jobs, 60% indicated that their organizations performed additional background checks for those employees. These data are illustrated in Figures 17 through 19.

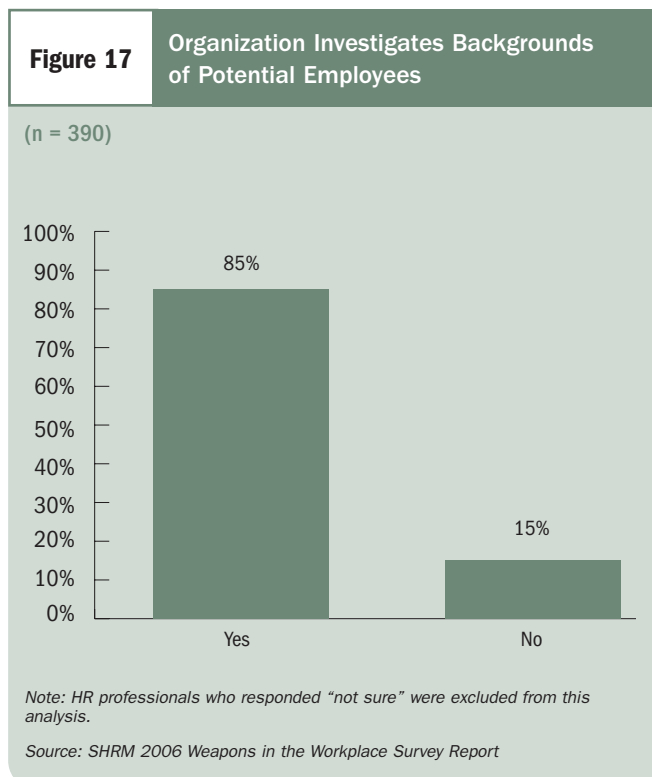


Figure 18 Types of Information Checked in Background Investigations of Potential Employees

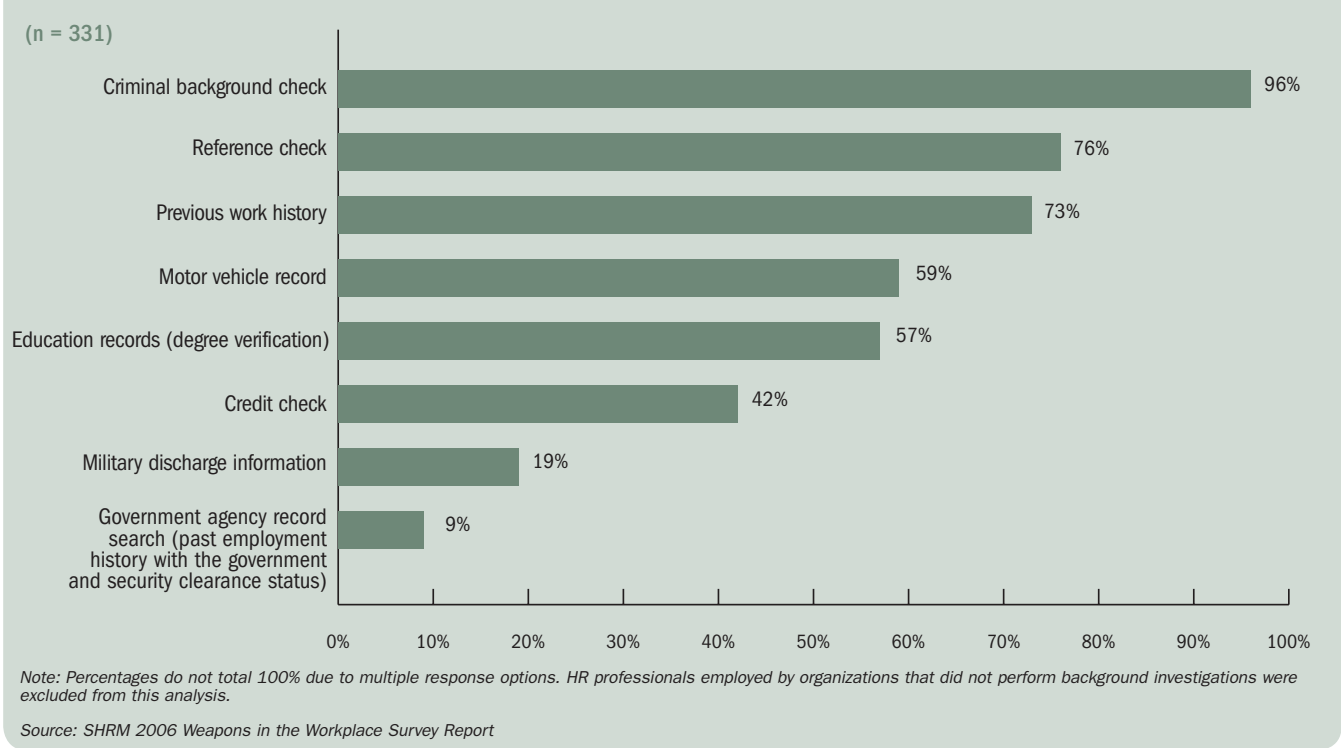
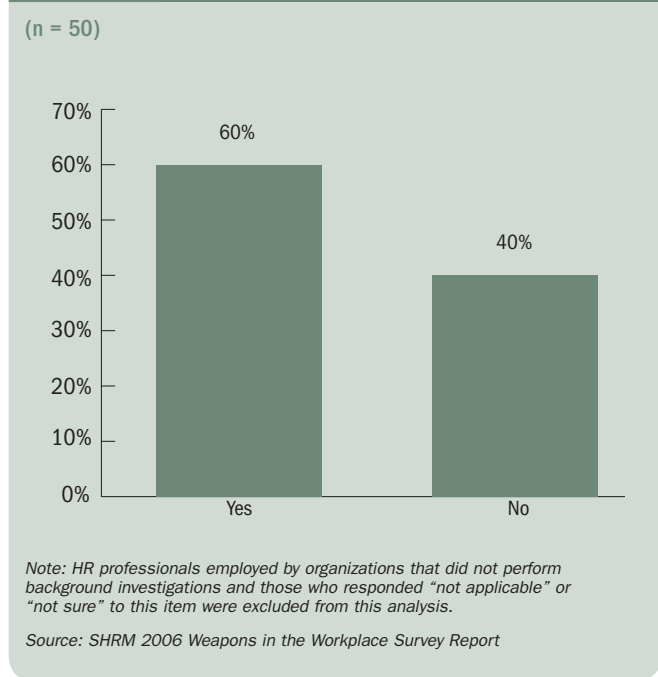


Figure 19 Additional Background Investigations for Potential Employees Who Are Required to Carry Weapons on the Job



Conclusions

At the time of this writing, 48 states in the United States have concealed gun laws permitting licensed individuals to carry handguns, increasing the potential for firearms to be carried into the workplace. Other types of weapons or agents potentially used as weapons present additional concerns for the workplace. Safety and security concerns in the community and among employees, including those represented by labor unions, figure prominently in employers' decisions about their weapons policies. Overall, the results of this survey indicate that not only do the majority of organizations have weapons policies in place, these policies are created proactively as a preventive measure against workplace violence rather than as a response to a weapons-related crisis.

From determining the need for a policy to enforcing an established policy, HR professionals are heavily involved with their organizations' weapons policies. HR professionals are most likely to be called upon to confront employees who do not comply

with the weapons policies, potentially also meting out disciplinary actions. These data suggest that responsibility for a successfully implemented weapons policy within the organization—meaning successful reduction of threat of weapons-related violence in the workplace—largely resides with the organization's HR department.

In the wake of highly publicized court cases involving employees and contract workers who were terminated after violating their employers' weapons policies by bringing firearms onto company premises (e.g., Weyerhaeuser Corporation), some state and local lawmakers proposed legislation to restrict employers' ability to ban firearms from the workplace. Although this research found that only a small percentage of organizations made changes to their weapons policies due to recent legislation, HR professionals will need to keep abreast of applicable state and local laws related to firearms and other weapons and update their organizations' weapons policies as needed.

An HR Perspective

By Nancy R. Lockwood, SPHR, GPHR, M.A., Manager, HR Content

According to the *SHRM 2006 Job Satisfaction Survey Report*, feeling safe in the work environment ranked in the top five job satisfaction factors for employees in the years 2002, 2004, 2005 and 2006. Correspondingly, the *SHRM 2006 Weapons in the Workplace Survey Report* highlights that 85% of HR professionals state that employers should be allowed to restrict firearms in the workplace and 13% agree in some cases. In fact, the survey report finds that 64% of organizations have a formal policy related to weapons in the workplace and 13% have an informal policy. Further, 86% of companies do not allow any weapons of any kind in the workplace. These data are important for HR practitioners responsible for policies and procedures regarding employee safety, including weapons in the workplace.

Safety has long been a critical factor for organizations in the United States. Safety is defined as freedom from hazard, risk or injury for employees on the job. The emphasis on safety, health and security in the workplace is in great part due to the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, the national policy

on safety and health enforced by the Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration. In the General Duty Clause of the Act, employers must keep employees informed, healthy and safe, and employees have the right to demand safety and health on the job.

Traditionally, safety, health and security in the organization have been the responsibility of HR. Being knowledgeable regarding this topic is increasingly important in today's society, in view of crisis management and related factors such as workplace violence. For example, 91% of HR departments are involved in the organization's weapons policies. Activities around these policies include determining the need to create a policy, developing the policy, educating employees about the policy, and enforcing and updating the policy.

Recent research points to the importance of safety in the workplace. For example, the *SHRM 2004 Workplace Violence Survey* highlights that nearly nine out of 10 organizations have some type of policy in place to address workplace violence. Regarding

weapons in the workplace policies, significant factors that influence HR decisions regarding the formal and informal policies of their organizations are the desire to take preventative measures against workplace violence, safety and security concerns in the local community, labor union concerns and employee/nonunion concerns.

For HR practitioners seeking additional information on workplace violence, an excellent resource is the National Institute for the Prevention of Workplace Violence (www.workplaceviolence911.com). A leader in the area of occupational violence prevention, the Institute's mission is to educate employers, unions and employees about the growing threat of violence in the workplace and how to effectively deal with it. In addition, organizations seeking to establish and/or update their weapons-in-the-workplace policy may wish to refer to the Society for Human Resource Management's weapon-free workplace sample policy at www.shrm.org/hrtools/policies_published/CMS_010362.asp#TopOfPage. ■

A Look Ahead: State Trends and Policies Influencing Weapons in the Workplace

By Jennifer Schramm, M.Phil., Manager, Workplace Trends and Forecasting

One of the top political trends in the most recent *SHRM Workplace Forecast*—a survey of HR professionals on the trends they think could have the greatest impact on the workplace over the next decade—is the devolution of political power to the states. This could be resulting in greater state-to-state variation of laws that employers are required to comply with. Frequently, new state legislation mandates higher thresholds for compliance than federal laws or has greater penalties for noncompliance. In such cases, employers automatically comply with federal laws when complying with state laws. However, there are a small number of issues where employers are increasingly arguing that state and federal laws are actually in opposition and that by complying with one they may have more difficulty complying with the other. The issue of weapons in the workplace tends to fall into this category, with some employers contending that they are unable to comply with federal health and safety regulations that require employers to maintain a safe working environment because state laws prohibit them from banning weapons in the workplace.

The rapid expansion of state legislation and the potential it may have for complicating federal compliance may be one reason why 64% of HR professionals said that the growing complexity of legal compliance will have a major impact on the workplace. These trends do not appear likely to abate. Political analysts believe rapid changes to state laws may have several causes that are likely to continue to play a role for the foreseeable future. Gridlock in Congress on a wide variety of issues may be leading more states to introduce their own legislation, while ballot initiatives may increasingly be used as a way to get voters to the polls in battleground states. Changes in voter demographics may also lead to high concentrations of voters that support specific types of legislation. This could lead to greater regionalization of certain kinds of laws.

A large number of HR professionals surveyed in the *SHRM Workplace Forecast* reported an increase in their involvement and/or lobbying efforts in state politics. Though 68% of HR professionals surveyed said they had already changed or were planning to change company

policy as a direct result of state regulations, most HR professionals did not report changing their company policies on weapons in the workplace, though this could continue to evolve with the introduction of new forms of legislation. SHRM surveys of employees on job satisfaction show that feeling safe in the workplace is growing more important to workers and is now one of the most important factors that determine how satisfied employees are with their jobs and employers. For this reason, even as legislation changes or new legislation is introduced, employers will continue to monitor the issue of weapons in the workplace as an ongoing part of their health and safety practices. For HR professionals, the issue could be one of a growing number of state policy developments that they must continuously track in order to ensure compliance. ■

Demographics

Organization Staff Size

(n = 377)

Small organization (1-99 employees)	35%
Medium organization (100-499 employees)	43%
Large organization (500 or more employees)	22%

Unionized Employees at Location

(n = 381)

Yes	19%
No	81%

Note: HR professionals who responded "not sure" were excluded from this analysis. Respondents who answered "yes" to this question were also asked to provide the percentage of unionized staff. There was an average of about one-half (51%) of employees unionized.

Organization Sector

(n = 385)

Privately owned for-profit organization	55%
Publicly owned for-profit organization	22%
Nonprofit organization	15%
Government agency	6%
Other	3%

Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Organization Industry

(n = 385)

Manufacturing (durable goods)	14%
Services (profit)	14%
Health	9%
Finance	6%
Services (nonprofit)	6%
Government	5%
Manufacturing (nondurable goods)	5%
Educational services	4%
Insurance	4%
Wholesale/retail trade	4%
Construction and mining/oil and gas	3%
High-tech	3%
Transportation	3%
Newspaper publishing/broadcasting	2%
Telecommunications	2%
Utilities	1%
Other	15%

HR Department Staff Size

(n = 376)

1-4	70%
5-9	15%
10-24	6%
25-49	3%
50-99	2%
100 or more	3%

Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Census Region

(n = 380)

Midwest (Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin)	36%
South (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, West Virginia)	24%
West (Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming)	23%
Northeast (Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont)	17%

SHRM Survey Reports

Available to members and the public

1. SHRM/CareerJournal.com 2006 Workplace Vacation Poll Findings (30 pages, September 2006)
2. SHRM/CareerJournal.com 2006 Workplace Romance Poll Findings (17 pages, January 2006)
3. SHRM/CareerJournal.com 2005 U.S. Job Recovery and Retention Survey Report (40 pages, November 2005)
4. Organizational Communication Poll Findings (24 pages, June 2005)
5. Workplace Productivity Poll Findings (17 pages, January 2005)
6. SHRM/CareerJournal.com Workplace Privacy Poll Findings (47 pages, January 2005)
7. SHRM/CareerJournal.com 2004 U.S. Job Recovery and Retention Poll Findings (33 pages, November 2004)
8. Employee Trust and Loyalty Poll Findings (21 pages, July 2004)
9. Job Negotiation Survey Findings (41 pages, April 2004)
10. Job Opportunities Survey (39 pages, September 2003)
11. Job Recovery Survey (28 pages, August 2003)
12. Job Opportunities Poll (39 pages, April 2003)
13. Job Satisfaction Poll (74 pages, December 2002)

14. HR Implications of the Attack on America (23 pages, September 2002)
15. Corporate Credibility and Employee Communications Survey (14 pages, August 2002)
16. Job Opportunities Poll (30 pages, August 2002)
17. Workplace Romance Survey (24 pages, February 2002)
18. School-to-Work Programs Survey (16 pages, January 2002)
19. HR Implications of the Attack on America: Executive Summary of Results of a Survey of HR Professionals (13 pages, October 2002)
20. Negotiating Rewards Poll (14 pages, October 2001)
21. Search Tactics Poll (8 pages, April 2001)

Available to members only:

1. 2006 Workplace Diversity and Changes to the EEO-1 Process Survey Report (35 pages, October 2006)
2. 2006 Strategic HR Management Survey Report (31 pages, October 2006)
3. Manufacturing Industry Findings on Human Resource Topics (47 pages, July 2006)
4. 2006 Benefits Survey Report (80 pages, June 2006)
5. 2006 Job Satisfaction Survey Report (57 pages, June 2006)

6. 2006 Succession Planning Survey Report (33 pages, June 2006)
7. 2006 Executive Compensation Survey Report (33 pages, May 2006)
8. 2006 Access to Human Capital and Employment Verification Survey Report (34 pages, March 2006)
9. 2006 Talent Management Survey Report (30 pages, January 2006)
10. 2005 Disaster Preparedness Survey Report (48 pages, October 2005)
11. 2005 Workplace Diversity Practices Survey Report (40 pages, October 2005)
12. 2005 Offshoring Survey Report (51 pages, October 2005)
13. 2005 Fair Labor Standards Act Survey Report (22 pages, August 2005)
14. 2005 Benefits Survey Report (72 pages, June 2005)
15. 2005 Future of the U.S. Labor Pool Survey Report (58 pages, June 2005)
16. 2005 Job Satisfaction Survey Report (52 pages, June 2005)
17. SHRM/Catalyst Employee Development Survey Report (36 pages, April 2005)
18. 2005 HR Technology Report (37 pages, March 2005)
19. 2005 Rewards Programs and Incentive Compensation Survey Report (38 pages, March 2005)
20. The Maturing Profession of HR: Worldwide and Regional View Survey Report (33 pages, February 2005)
21. Reference and Background Checking Survey Report (41 pages, January 2005)
22. Job Satisfaction Series Survey Report (193 pages, August 2004)
23. Generational Differences Survey Report (41 pages, August 2004)
24. Employer-Sponsored Investment Advice Survey Report (60 pages, July 2004)
25. Human Resources Outsourcing Survey Report (40 pages, July 2004)
26. 2004 Benefits Survey Report (76 pages, June 2004)
27. Health Care Survey Report (40 pages, June 2004)
28. SHRM/CNNfn Job Satisfaction Series: Job Satisfaction Survey Report (52 pages, April 2004)
29. SHRM/CNNfn Job Satisfaction Series: Job Compensation/Pay Survey Report (36 pages, February 2004)
30. The Maturing Profession of Human Resources in the United States Survey Report (48 pages, January 2004)
31. Workplace Violence Survey (52 pages, January 2004)
32. SHRM Eldercare Survey (40 pages, December 2003)
33. SHRM/CNNfn Job Satisfaction Series: Job Benefits Survey (57 pages, December 2003)
34. Undergraduate HR Curriculum Study (45 pages, October 2003)
35. SHRM Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Survey (10 pages, October 2003)
36. Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) Survey (20 pages, August 2003)
37. SHRM/SHRM Foundation 2003 Benefits Survey (81 pages, June 2003)
38. SHRM Job Satisfaction Series: Job Security Survey (41 pages, June 2003)
39. SHRM/NOWCC/CED Older Workers Survey (53 pages, June 2003)
40. March 2003 Current Events Survey (28 pages, May 2003)
41. 2003 FMLA Poll (20 pages, April 2003)
42. 2003 Business Ethics Survey (48 pages, April 2003)
43. Employer Incentives for Hiring Individuals With Disabilities (66 pages, April 2003)
44. Fun Work Environment Survey (56 pages, November 2002)
45. Aligning HR With Organizational Strategy (53 pages, November 2002)

46. Recruiter Cost/Budget Survey (30 pages, October 2002)
47. 2002 SHRM/Fortune Survey on the Changing Face of Diversity (16 pages, October 2002)
48. Workplace Demographic Trends Survey (37 pages, June 2002)
49. Global Leadership Survey (36 pages, June 2002)
50. SHRM 2002 Benefits Survey Results (57 pages, April 2002)
51. A Study of Effective Workforce Management (36 pages, February 2002)
52. Resource Strategies, Stages of Development and Organization Size Survey (46 pages, January 2002)
53. Job Security and Layoffs Survey (76 pages, December 2001)
54. World Events Survey—Impact on Global Mobility (4 pages, November 2001)
55. Religion in the Workplace (58 pages, June 2001)
56. Employee Referral Programs (40 pages, June 2001)
57. Impact of Diversity Initiatives on the Bottom Line (41 pages, June 2001)
58. 2001 Benefits Survey (59 pages, April 2001)
59. 2000 FMLA Survey (51 pages, January 2001)
60. Workplace Privacy Survey (51 pages, December 2000)
61. Performance Management Survey (43 pages, December 2000)
62. Impact of Diversity Initiatives Poll (5 pages, October 2000)
63. 2000 Retention Survey (40 pages, June 2000)
64. SHRM Cover Letters and Resume Survey (39 pages, May 2000)
65. 2000 Benefits Survey (52 pages, April 2000)

www.shrm.org/surveys

ISBN 158644-093-4



9 781586 440930

SHRM®

2006 Weapons in the Workplace
Survey Report

\$79.95 member/\$99.95 nonmember
62.16502