SAFER WITH SCOUT | 2026 RESEARCH REVIEW

Workplace & Public Venue Violence

What 2026 taught us about recognizing risk, and what to carry into 2027

The defining lesson

The strongest prevention opportunity often comes before a violent incident. Research released in 2026 reinforces that concerning behavior, communicated threats, and changes in circumstances may be visible to different people well before an attack. The challenge is recognizing the pattern, sharing concerns responsibly, and acting appropriately.

Four trends worth carrying forward

1. Everyday exposure matters. Workplace violence extends beyond headline-grabbing shootings to threats, intimidation, harassment, and assault. Recent occupational research highlights the disproportionate burden of nonfatal assaults in health care and other public-facing environments. [1]

2. Warning signs are often distributed. A 2026 study of 171 historical mass public shootings found that 85.7% of perpetrators communicated violent thoughts or intentions before the attack. Friends, family, and coworkers were often among those who observed concerning information. This is a finding about the studied cases, not a prediction rule for individuals. [2]

3. Personal circumstances can intersect with workplace risk. New Secret Service guidance emphasizes the value of assessing concerning behavior in context, including grievances, life stressors, and relationships with workplaces. Stress, isolation, or fear alone do not establish dangerousness; behavior and credible threats require careful, individualized assessment. [3]

4. Prevention is becoming more structured. FBI guidance issued in 2026 encourages multidisciplinary behavioral threat assessment and management in health care. The underlying principle also matters for workplaces and public venues: identify, assess, support, manage, and escalate when warranted. [4]

What organizations should take into 2027

Build situational awareness: Equip employees and venue staff to notice observable changes, escalating confrontations, explicit threats, and concerning activity, without profiling people by appearance or personal hardship.

Make reporting practical: Provide trusted, accessible channels for factual observations, with clear triage, privacy safeguards, and timely follow-through.

Connect the dots: Bring together security, HR, operations, and qualified threat-assessment professionals so isolated observations can be evaluated in context.

Act before a crisis: Combine proportionate intervention, support services, de-escalation, and emergency response planning. No single signal or technology can reliably predict violence.

The 2027 imperative: Move beyond asking only, “How will we respond if violence occurs?” Start asking, “What are we equipped to recognize and responsibly address before it does?”

Selected sources | Research published in 2026; not a final 2026 incident census.

[1] NCCI / National Safety Council, “Examining the Upward Trend in Workplace Violence” (Oct. 2026). [2] Rockefeller Institute, “Sharing Information to Stop Mass

Shootings” (June 2026). [3] U.S. Secret Service NTAC, “Preventing Targeted Workplace Violence” (Oct. 2026). [4] FBI, behavioral threat assessment guidance for health care (Mar. 2026).