

Employee Vigilance through the Power of Hello

Alert employees can spot suspicious activity and report it



Used effectively, the right words can be a powerful tool. Simply saying “Hello” can prompt a casual conversation with unknown individuals and help you determine why they are there. **The OHNO approach – Observe, Initiate a Hello, Navigate the Risk, and Obtain Help** – helps employees observe and evaluate suspicious behaviors, empowers them to mitigate potential risk, and obtain help when necessary.

The **OHNO** approach to risk prevention relies on reasonable persons to make these observations to properly detect and report terrorism/criminal-related suspicious behavior.



For additional Power of Hello resources please visit cisa.gov/employee-vigilance-power-hello.

DHS’ “If You See Something, Say Something®” campaign provides additional information on how to recognize and report the indicators of terrorism-related suspicious activity.

1 OBSERVE



Stay vigilant of your surroundings.

Alert employees can identify suspicious behavior, such as:

- Placing an object or package and abandoning it or leaving the area.
- A prolonged interest in or taking pictures/videos of personnel, facilities, security features, or infrastructure in an unusual or covert manner.
- Unauthorized people trying to enter a restricted area or impersonating authorized personnel.
- Loitering at a location without a reasonable explanation.
- Avoiding security personnel or systems.
- Expressed or implied threats of violence.

2 INITIATE A HELLO



Assess the situation to determine if you should engage an individual in your space.

Decide if a simple “hello” will deter a potential threat or immediate notification to law enforcement or security is necessary. If there is a risk of imminent violence, remove yourself from the situation and seek safety.

Before engaging, consider these tips:

- *Maintain a safe distance (relaxed, alert, and off to the side of the person) and avoid being alone with an individual who is combative or potentially violent.*
- *Know your own vulnerabilities and tendencies and recognize that sometimes the best intervention is knowing when to seek additional help.*
- *Be aware of your non-verbal communications. Ensure your tone, facial expressions, body language, and gestures relay calm and empathy.*
- *Be aware of emphasizing words or syllables as that can negatively affect the situation.*
- *Maintain a safe distance and avoid touching the other person - respect personal space.*
- *Give your full attention, nod, avoid interrupting or changing the subject, and ask questions if the situation dictates but be mindful that this could upset the individual.*

When engaging, smile, make eye contact, and introduce yourself.

- “Hello, hope you are having a good day, I will be over there if you need anything.”
- “Hello, if you need assistance I will be around if needed.”
- “If you are looking for something or someone in particular I can assist if needed.”
- “I will be here in case you need help.”

3 NAVIGATE THE RISK



Navigate the risk by asking yourself if the behavior you observed is threatening or suspicious.

When observing activity or behavior that would arouse reasonable suspicion of terrorism or other criminal activity, employees should consider these questions:

- Do they appear to be legitimately patronizing the business or service?
- Is their clothing consistent with the weather or for the gathering of the day?
- Are they avoiding security?
- Are they asking questions about business functions or employee information? (e.g., “Who is closing?” or “How many people work here?”, etc.)
- Causing you to feel threatened? (If you feel threatened, calmly walk away and call 9-1-1.)

4 OBTAIN HELP



After navigating the risk, obtain help from management or authorities.

Using OHNO, provide the best information to first responders and security personnel.

- Call 9-1-1 for emergencies or if you feel in danger.
- To organize your thoughts to management or the police ask yourself 5W's:
 - What is happening?
 - Who is doing it?
 - Where is it taking place?
 - When did you observe it?
 - Why are they here?
- You may submit suspicious activity reports to your local law enforcement or call the non-emergency number.

The OHNO approach describes activities and behaviors that may be suspicious or indicative of criminal activity. These activities may be constitutionally protected and should be reported only when there are articulable facts to support a rational conclusion that the behavior is suspicious. Do not report based solely on protected activities, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or a combination of only such factors.