
US Department of Labor cites leading convenience store chain for serious violation after gunmen shoot cashier in Orlando robbery

Description

A subsidiary of one of the world's best-known operators of convenience stores and fueling stations could have prevented a store cashier in Orlando from suffering a serious gunshot injury by following the company's own established safety procedures, a U.S. Department of Labor investigation has found.

Inspectors with the department's Occupational Safety and Health Administration learned that two unidentified men entered the Circle K location on Silver Star Road shortly after 1 a.m. on Jan. 19, 2024, pointed firearms and screamed at the cashier to open the register. As the employee moved back from the register, one of the assailants fired a shot that struck the employee in the left shoulder.

“People employed by late or all-night businesses, such as gas stations, convenience stores and drive-through fast food restaurants face a high probability of violent incidents as few witnesses, accessible cash, poorly lit stores and darkened parking areas often attract dangerous thieves,” explained OSHA Area Director Erin Sanchez in Orlando, Florida. “Gratefully, the cashier in this case survived the attack, but not all workers at Circle K and other similar businesses have been as fortunate.”

OSHA cited Circle K Stores Inc. with one serious violation for failing to provide a place of employment free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm. The agency has [proposed \\$16,131 in penalties](#), the maximum amount allowed by federal statute. The company has contested the findings before the independent [Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission](#).

A review of [OSHA investigations of Circle K locations since 2014](#) finds five workers suffered fatal gunshot injuries at two locations in Texas in August 2021 and December 2018, Georgia in September 2019, Florida in June 2016 and Alabama in December 2015. The majority of these incidents took place in the evening or overnight hours.

Deterrents to help late-night retailers protect employees from workplace violence include interior and exterior security cameras, cash register barriers or enclosures, a drop safe or cash management device, proper lighting inside and outside the store and signage explaining the register holds \$50 or less.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health cites robbery-related homicides and assaults as the leading cause of death for retail workers. In 2019, [the rate of deadly workplace violence among convenience store workers was 14 times higher than the overall rate for private industry workers](#).

OSHA offers [recommendations for workplace violence prevention programs in late-night retail establishments](#) with employers' tips to design and implement programs to prevent workplace violence.

A subsidiary of Couche-Tard in Quebec, Canada – operating more than 16,700 stores in 29 countries and territories and employing more than 150,000 people – Circle K Stores Inc. is one of the largest U.S. independent convenience store operators. It is based in Tempe, Arizona.

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