



Awareness in Action: Case Study

Who could become an insider threat? An insider threat is anyone with authorized access to U.S. Government resources and uses that access, either wittingly or unwittingly, to harm national security. Insider threats can have far-reaching consequences and impacts on national security.



James Wells

James Michael Wells

- Civilian employee at Coast Guard Communications Station Kodiak, Alaska
- Age at time of incident: 61
- Date of incident: April 12, 2012

What Happened

- In December 2011, a habitual poor performer often absent from the work area, Wells was told by his supervisor to “be a part of the process or retire.” A month later, the supervisor informed Wells that others would attend an annual conference in his stead due to his disciplinary problems. A heated discussion followed.
- On April 12, 2012, Wells entered the communications rigger shop where he shot and killed two co-workers with a .44-caliber revolver.
- Subsequent FBI investigation indicated that Wells had deliberately planned the attack and attempted to establish an alibi for his actions.



Family at
Coast Guard
Service

Active Shooter/Anti-Social Behavior Indicators

- Disgruntled, substandard civilian employee
- Frequently feuded with coworkers and supervisors
- Failed to follow regulations and guidelines
- Displayed temper and falsely accused co-workers of theft
- Numerous reprimands, disciplinary sanctions, theft of government fuel

Impacts

- Death of two Coast Guard employees, who left behind wives and children
- Found guilty of two counts of first-degree murder, two counts of murder of an officer or employee of the United States, and two counts of possession and use of a firearm in a crime of violence
- Sentenced to four consecutive life sentences at the ADX Florence, a federal supermax prison, and restitution of nearly \$1.5 million



ADX Florence
federal prison

Learn More

This case study examined a real-life insider threat. Your awareness is key to protecting our national security from insider threats like this one. Visit the Center for Development of Security Excellence's website (<http://www.cdse.edu>) for additional case studies, information, materials, and training or go directly to the Insider Threat Toolkit at <http://www.cdse.edu/toolkits/insider/index.php>

If you SEE something, SAY something.