

## Policy Statements

The best protection employers can offer is to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence against or by their employees. The employer should establish a workplace violence prevention policy or incorporate the information into an existing accident prevention program, employee handbook, or manual of standard operating procedures. It is critical to ensure that all employees know the policy and understand that all claims of workplace violence will be investigated and remedied promptly.

A workplace violence policy statement should convey that:

- All employees are responsible for maintaining a safe work environment;
- The policy covers not only acts of physical violence, but harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior;
- The policy covers incidents involving coworkers and incidents involving individuals from outside the agency perpetrating violence against agency employees;
- The agency will respond appropriately to all reported incidents;
- The agency will act to stop inappropriate behavior; and
- Supervisors and all of the offices involved in responding to incidents will be supported by agency management in their efforts to deal with violent and potentially violent situations.

The best plans for threat assessment and response will be useless if employers or those assigned to respond to workplace violence don't know that a threat has been made. The success of workplace violence prevention program depends largely on employees reporting incidents of violence or threats before they escalate into a dangerous situation.

Along with encouraging employees to report violence or threats, employers also have to inform them where to report and what to report. Just as important as knowing how to report incidents is knowing that reports will be heard and responded to.

The following are examples of some policies that can be used in whole or in part and customized to fit your workplace. It is important that all employees are aware of the policy so it is a good idea to not only have it accessible to employees whether by posting it, having it read and signed by new hires, or passed out in memo format but that it is reinforced at least annually to remind employees of its importance.

### Example 1

[Insert Company name] recognizes that violence in the workplace is a growing problem necessitating a considered response. The costs of workplace violence are great, both in human and financial terms. Therefore, this Company has adopted this policy regarding workplace violence.

The safety and security of the Company's employees is of primary importance. Acts or threats of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment and/or coercion, which involve or affect the Company or the Company's employees will not be tolerated.

This prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved in the operation of [insert Company name] including, but not limited to, employees, contract and temporary workers, and anyone else on workplace premises. Violations of this policy by any individual on Company property or while acting as a representative of our Company while off Company property will result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

Workplace violence is any intentional conduct which is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to cause an individual to reasonably fear for their personal safety or the safety of their family, friends, and/or property such that employment conditions are altered or a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment is created for one or several employees. Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to, threats or acts of violence:

- occurring on workplace premises, regardless of the relationship between the Company and the parties involved in the incident;
- occurring off workplace premises involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of the Company;
- occurring off workplace premises involving a Company employee if the threats or acts affect the business interests of the Company;
- occurring off workplace premises when a Company employee is a victim if the Company determines that the incident may lead to an incident of violence on workplace premises;
- or resulting in the conviction of an employee or agent of the Company, or of an individual, performing services for the Company on a contract or temporary basis, under any criminal code provision relating to violence or threats of violence which adversely affect the legitimate business interests of the Company.

Specific examples of conduct which may be considered threats or acts of violence under this policy include, but are not limited to:

- threatening physical or aggressive contact directed toward another individual;

- threatening an individual or their family, friends, associates, or property with physical harm;
- intentional destruction or threat of destruction of Company property or another's property;
- harassing or threatening phone calls, voicemails, or emails;
- surveillance or stalking;
- and/or veiled threats of physical harm or like intimidation.

Workplace violence does not refer to occasional comments of a socially acceptable nature. Such comments may include references to legitimate sporting activities, popular entertainment, or current events. Rather, it refers to behavior that is personally offensive, threatening, or intimidating.

If you become aware of any threat or violent conduct of the type listed above, you should immediately report the conduct to your supervisor or Human Resources. Any person who engages in a threat or violent action non Company property may be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits and may be required, at management's discretion, to remain off of workplace premises pending the outcome of an investigation into the incident. [insert Company name] expressly reserves its rights to secure the assistance of any appropriate law enforcement agency in addressing any situation involving any potentially violent circumstances at the Company.

When threats are made or acts of violence are committed by an employee, a judgment will be made by management as to what actions are appropriate for corrective action.

Under this policy, decisions may be made to prevent a threat from being carried out or a violent act from occurring. No existing Company policy or procedure should be interpreted in a manner that prevents this from occurring.

Any employee who applies for a temporary or permanent protective or restraining order which lists any Company location as a protected area must provide a copy of the order to Human Resources. Such information will be kept confidential to the extent possible without compromising the safety and security of the Company and its employees.

## Example 2

It is the policy of \_\_\_\_\_ that each of our employees has the right to a workplace free from violence. Furthermore, every employee has the right to seek assistance through the EAP to deal with any issues of violence, wherever they happen, including outside of the workplace. For purposes of this policy, violence is defined as any act in which one person seeks to hurt or intimidate another through the use of physical contact or verbal harassment or manipulation. This includes actions of employees, supervisors, customers, suppliers or any other person.

\_\_\_\_\_ shall:

- Seek to eliminate the potential for violence in and around the workplace.
- Seek to eliminate the potential for violence by affecting the attitudes and behavior of our customers and suppliers.

We will use a variety of methods to accomplish the above including:

1. We will disseminate to all employees/supervisors/managers a statement against all acts of violence, including family violence. This statement will be posted in prominent locations accessible to customers and suppliers.
2. Our opposition to all forms of sexual harassment will be made clear by disseminating to all employees/supervisors/managers our policy prohibiting sexual harassment. Copies of the policy, informational posters or other media will be prominently displayed in areas accessible to our customers and suppliers.
3. We will provide information to all employees about services available through our EAP including those designed to help employees deal with any issues related to workplace or family violence.
4. We will regularly review our workplace environment and minimize wherever possible physical attributes which may expose our employees, customers or suppliers to violent acts.
5. Employees with questions or complaints about workplace behaviors which fall under this policy may discuss them with \_\_\_\_\_. Concerns will be investigated and appropriate action will be taken. This may include disciplinary action for an employee who is a perpetrator of a violent act.

Everyone with whom we come into contact in our work deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect. This means that we treat each other, our customers, our suppliers and all others in this fashion and that we can expect the same treatment in return.

***It is our belief that by helping to prevent violence in the workplace and in the family, our company is helping to foster a safer, better society.***

Example 3 – Memo Format

(Can be sent out as an annual reminder of company policy)

MEMORANDUM FOR EMPLOYEES OF THE DEPARTMENT OF \_\_\_\_\_

FROM: DEPARTMENT OR AGENCY HEAD

SUBJECT: Workplace Violence

It is [*insert Company name*]'s policy to promote a safe environment for its employees. This Company is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work environment free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. While this kind of conduct is not pervasive at our workplace, no company is immune. Every company will be affected by disruptive behavior at one time or another.

Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in our workplace will not be tolerated; that is, all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.

We need your cooperation to implement this policy effectively and maintain a safe working environment. Do not ignore violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior. If you observe or experience such behavior by anyone on agency premises, whether he or she is an agency employee or not, report it immediately to a supervisor or manager. Supervisors and managers who receive such reports should seek advice from \_\_\_\_\_ at xxx-xxxx regarding investigating the incident and initiating appropriate action.

**PLEASE NOTE: Threats or assaults that require immediate attention by security or police should be reported first to \_\_\_\_\_ at xxx-xxxx or to police at 911.**

I will support all efforts made by supervisors and personnel in dealing with violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other disruptive behavior in our workplace and will monitor whether this policy is being implemented effectively. If you have any questions about this policy statement, please contact \_\_\_\_\_ at xxx-xxxx.

#### Example 4

This organization does not tolerate workplace violence. We define workplace violence as actions or words that endanger or harm another employee or result in other employees having a reasonable belief that they are in danger. Such actions include:

- Verbal or physical harassment
- Verbal or physical threats
- Assaults or other violence
- Any other behavior that causes others to feel unsafe (e.g. bullying, sexual harassment)

Company policy requires an immediate response to all reports of violence. All threatening incidents will be investigated and documented by the employee relations department.

If appropriate, the company may provide counseling services or referrals for employees. The following disciplinary actions may also be taken:

- Oral reprimand
- Written reprimand
- Suspension
- Termination

It's the responsibility of all employees to report all threatening behavior to management immediately. The goal of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of all people in our workplace.

### Sample workplace weapons policy

In order to ensure a safe environment for employees and customers, our establishment, [Employer Name] prohibits the wearing, transporting, storage, or presence of firearms or other dangerous weapons in our facilities or on our property. Any employee in possession of a firearm or other weapon while on our facilities/property or while otherwise fulfilling job responsibilities may face disciplinary action including termination. A client or visitor who violates this policy may be removed from the property and reported to police authorities. Possession of a valid concealed weapons permit authorized by the State of \_\_\_\_\_ is not an exemption under this policy.

#### *Definition*

Firearms or other dangerous weapons mean:

- any device from which a projectile may be fired by an explosive
- any simulated firearm operated by gas or compressed air
- sling shot
- sand club
- metal knuckles
- any spring blade knife
- any knife which opens or is ejected open by an outward, downward thrust or movement
- any instrument that can be used as a club and poses a reasonable risk of injury

#### *Exemptions*

This policy does not apply to:

- any law enforcement personnel engaged in official duties
- any security personnel engaged in official duties
- any person engaged in military activities sponsored by the federal or state government, while engaged in official duties

#### *Notification*

"No Firearms or other Dangerous Weapons" signs shall be conspicuously posted within all [Employer Name] facilities and in parking areas and grounds surrounding our facilities. These signs will clearly indicate that firearms and other weapons are not to be carried onto our property or into our facilities.

#### *Reporting*

Staff or security personnel will request any visitor found in possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon to remove it from the facility and local law enforcement authorities will be notified promptly.

### Sample policy addressing domestic violence in the workplace

Domestic violence is abusive behavior that is physical, sexual and/or psychological, intended to establish and maintain control over a partner. Domestic violence is a serious problem that affects people from all walks of life. It can adversely affect the well-being and productivity of employees who are victims, as well as their coworkers. Other effects of domestic violence in the workplace include increased absenteeism, turnover, health care costs and reduced productivity.

#### *Policy statement*

The [Employer Name] will not tolerate domestic violence including harassment of any employee or client while in our facilities or vehicles, on our property or while conducting business. This includes the display of any violent or threatening behavior (verbal or physical) that may result in physical or emotional injury or otherwise places one's safety and productivity at risk.

Any employee, who threatens, harasses or abuses someone at our workplace or from the workplace using any company resources such as work time, workplace phones, fax machines, mail, e-mail or other means may be subject to corrective or disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Corrective or disciplinary action may also be taken against employees who are arrested, convicted or issued a permanent injunction as a result of domestic violence when such action has a direct connection to the employee's duties in our company.

The [Employer Name] is committed to working with employees who are victims of domestic violence to prevent abuse and harassment from occurring in the workplace. No employees will be penalized or disciplined solely for being a victim of harassment in the workplace. Our company will provide appropriate support and assistance to employees who are victims of domestic violence. This includes: confidential means for coming forward for help, resource and referral information, work schedule adjustments or leave as needed to obtain assistance, and workplace relocation as feasible.

Employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence are also encouraged to seek assistance. Our company will provide information regarding counseling and certified treatment resources, and make work schedule arrangements to receive such assistance.

Managers/supervisors or human resource professionals in our company should receive domestic violence training. Our company should also:

- Be responsive when an employee who is either the victim or perpetrator of domestic violence asks for help.
- Maintain confidentiality. Information about the employee should only be given to others on a need-to-know basis.
- Work with the victim, personnel office, manager, employee advisory service/resource, available security staff, law enforcement and community domestic violence programs, if necessary, to assess the need for and develop a workplace safety plan for the victim. Victims of domestic violence know their abusers better than anyone else. When it comes to their own personal safety, offer to assist them in developing a workplace safety plan, but allow them to decide what goes in it. If it is determined that other employees or clients are at risk, it is essential to take measures to provide protection for them.
- Adjust the employee's work schedule and/or grant leave if the employee needs to take time off for medical assistance, legal assistance, court appearances, counseling,



relocation or to make other necessary arrangements to create a safe situation. Be sure to follow all applicable personnel rules.

- Maintain communication with the employee during the employee's absence. Remember to maintain confidentiality of the employee's whereabouts.
- Post information about domestic violence in your work area. Also, have information available where employees can obtain it without having to request it or be seen removing it, such as restrooms, lunchrooms or where other employee resource information is located.
- Honor all civil protection orders. As appropriate, participate in court proceedings in obtaining protection orders on behalf of the employee.
- Maintain a list of services available to victims and perpetrators of domestic violence. This list should include: employee advisory service/resource, local shelters, certified domestic violence treatment programs available to perpetrators, information about how to obtain civil orders of protection and any available community resources.
- Advise and assist supervisors and managers in taking corrective or disciplinary actions against perpetrators of domestic violence.

*Options for employees who are victims of domestic violence*

- Tell a trusted coworker, supervisor or manager and ask for help.
- Contact your personnel officer for assistance.
- Contact the employee advisory service/resource
- Call the local police.
- Notify your supervisor of the possible need to be absent. Find out what work schedule or leave options are available to you. Be clear about your plan to return to work and maintain communications with your supervisor during your absence.
- If appropriate, and safety is a concern, submit a recent photograph of the abuser and a copy of your protection order to your supervisor. This assists your employer in identifying the abuser should he/she appear in the workplace.

*Options for employees who are perpetrators of domestic violence*

- Tell a trusted coworker, supervisor or manager and ask for help.
- Contact your personnel officer for assistance.
- Contact the employee advisory service/resource.
- Obtain a referral to a certified domestic violence perpetrators treatment program.

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

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Effective Date for Program

Our establishment, **[Employer Name]** is concerned and committed to our employees' safety and health. We refuse to tolerate violence in the workplace and will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring by implementing a Workplace Violence Prevention Program (WPVP). We will provide adequate authority and budgetary resources to responsible parties so that our goals and responsibilities can be met.

All managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing and maintaining our WPVP Program. We encourage employee participation in designing and implementing our program. We require prompt and accurate reporting of all violent incidents whether or not physical injury has occurred. We will not discriminate against victims of workplace violence.

A copy of this Policy Statement and our WPVP Program is readily available to all employees from each manager and supervisor.

Our program ensures that all employees, including supervisors and managers, adhere to work practices that are designed to make the workplace more secure, and do not engage in verbal threats or physical actions which create a security hazard for others in the workplace.

All employees, including managers and supervisors, are responsible for using safe work practices, for following all directives, policies and procedures, and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

The management of our establishment is responsible for ensuring that all safety and health policies and procedures involving workplace security are clearly communicated and understood by all employees. Managers and supervisors are expected to enforce the rules fairly and uniformly.

Our Program will be reviewed and updated annually.

## THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

A Threat Assessment Team will be established and part of their duties will be to assess the vulnerability to workplace violence at our establishment and reach agreement on preventive actions to be taken. They will be responsible for auditing our overall Workplace Violence Program.

The Threat Assessment Team will consist of:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

The team will develop employee training programs in violence prevention and plan for responding to acts of violence. They will communicate this plan internally to all employees. The Threat Assessment Team will begin its work by reviewing previous incidents of violence at our workplace. They will analyze and review existing records identifying patterns that may indicate causes and severity of assault incidents and identify changes necessary to correct these hazard. These records include but are not limited to, OSHA 200 logs, past incident reports, medical records, insurance records, workers compensation records, police reports, accident investigations, training records, grievances, minutes of meetings, etc. The team will communicate with similar local businesses and trade associates concerning their experiences with workplace violence.

Additionally, they will inspect the workplace and evaluate the work tasks of all employees to determine the presence of hazards, conditions, operations and other situations with might place our workers at risk of occupational assault incidents. Employees will be surveyed to identify the potential for violent incidents and to identify or confirm the need for improved security measures. These surveys shall be reviewed, updated and distributed as needed or at least once within a two year period.

Periodic inspections to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards and threats of workplace violence will be performed by the following representatives of the Assessment Team, in the following areas of our workplace:

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_

Representative: \_\_\_\_\_ Area \_\_\_\_\_

Periodic inspections will be performed according to the following schedule:

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Frequency (Daily, weekly, monthly, etc.)

## HAZARD ASSESSMENT

On [Date], the Threat Assessment Team completed the hazard assessment. This consisted of a records review, inspection of the workaday and employee survey.

Records Review - The Threat Assessment Team reviewed the following records:

- ☐ OSHA 200 logs for the last three years
- ☐ Incident reports
- ☐ Records of or information compiled for recording of assault incidents or near assault incidents
- ☐ Insurance records
- ☐ Police reports
- ☐ Accident investigations
- ☐ Training records
- ☐ Grievances
- ☐ Other relevant records or information: \_\_\_\_\_

From these records, we have identified the following issues that need to be addressed:

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## WORKPLACE SECURITY ANALYSIS

Inspection - The Threat Assessment Team inspected the workplace on [Date]. From this inspection the following issues have been identified:

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Review of Tasks - The Threat Assessment Team also reviewed the work tasks of our employees to determine the presence of hazards, conditions, operations and situations which might place workers at risk of occupational assault incidents. The following factors were considered:

- Exchange of money with the public
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working late at night or early in the morning hours
- Working in a high crime area
- Guarding valuable property or possessions
- Working in community settings
- Staffing levels

From this analysis, the following issues have been identified:

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## WORKPLACE SURVEY

Under the direction of the Threat Assessment Team, we distributed a survey among all of our employees to identify any additional issues that were not noted in the initial stages of the hazard assessment.

From that survey, the following issues have been identified:

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## WORKPLACE HAZARD CONTROL AND PREVENTION

In order to reduce the risk of workplace violence, the following measures have been recommended:

Engineering Controls and Building and Work Area Design:

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Management has instituted the following as a result of the workplace security inspection and recommendations made by the Threat Assessment Team:

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These changes were completed on [Date].

Policies and Procedures developed as a result of the Threat Assessment Team's recommendations:

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**TRAINING AND EDUCATION** Training for all employees, including managers and supervisors, will be given during employee orientation. This training will be repeated every two years.

Training shall include:

- a review and definition of workplace violence;
- a full explanation and full description of our program;
- instructions on how to report all incidents including threats and verbal abuse;
- methods of recognizing and responding to workplace security hazards;
- training on how to identify potential workplace security hazards (such as no lights in parking lot while leaving late at night, unknown person loitering outside the building, etc.).
- review of measures that have been instituted in this organization to prevent workplace violence including:

- use of security equipment and procedures;
- how to attempt to diffuse hostile or threatening situations;
- how to summon assistance in case of an emergency or hostage situation;
- post-incident procedures, including medical follow-up and the availability of counseling and referral.

Training will be conducted by \_\_\_\_\_ and will be repeated every two years.

All training records will be filed with \_\_\_\_\_.

A general review of this program will be conducted every two years. Our training program will be updated to reflect changes in our Workplace Prevention Program.

#### INCIDENT REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION

All incidents must be reported within [Time Frame]. An "Incident Report Form" will be completed for all incidents. One copy will be forwarded to the Threat Assessment Team for their review and a copy will be filed with [Job Title]. You can obtain a Form from [Name].

Each incident will be evaluated by the Threat Assessment Team. The team will discuss the causes of the incident and will make recommendations on how to revise the program to prevent similar incidents from occurring. All revisions of the Program will be put into writing and made available to all employees.

#### RECORDKEEPING

We will maintain an accurate record of all workplace violence incidents. All incident report forms will be kept for a minimum of [Time], or for the time specified in the Statute of Limitations for our local jurisdiction.

Any injury which requires more than first aid, is a lost-time injury, requires modified duty, or causes loss of consciousness, will be recorded on the OSHA 300 log. Doctors' reports and supervisors' reports will be kept of each recorded incident, if applicable.

Incidents of abuse, verbal attack, or aggressive behavior which may be threatening to the employee, but not resulting in injury, will be recorded. These records will be evaluated on a regular basis by the Threat Assessment Team.

#### EAP PROGRAM

We offer to all of our employees an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which may be utilized in the event of workplace violence. The EAP provides employees with free, easily accessible and confidential means of addressing issues that may arise as a result of a violent situation or alleviate tensions that may lead to workplace violence. Our EAP can be accessed by calling the following confidential number: \_\_\_\_\_.

## POLICY STATEMENT

This Company's policy statement is as follows:

[Insert policy statement. See pg. 42 for sample policies]