



VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE POLICY

PURPOSE

Washington County's Violence in the Workplace Policy is designed to provide a safe work environment for all employees and all citizens who conduct business with County employees or on County property, and to establish a process for reporting and responding to events or threats of violence.

POLICY STATEMENT

It is the policy of Washington County to provide a working environment that is free from violent acts or threats against a person's life, health, well-being, family or property. Violence in the workplace may occur between one employee and another, or between any member of the public and a County employee. Such acts or threats of violence by physical acts, words, gestures or symbols are entirely unacceptable and violate the County's policy. Every covered individual is required to report acts or threats of violence of which he/she is aware.

WHO THE POLICY COVERS

This policy applies to all persons involved in the County's operation, including but not limited to County personnel, contract and temporary workers, and anyone else on County property.

DEFINITION

"Threats or acts of violence" include, but are not limited to, statements or conduct against persons or property that is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to alter the employment conditions at Washington County, or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or more Washington County employees, its volunteers, or any person conducting business with the County.

EXAMPLES OF PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Specific examples of conduct that may be considered "threats or acts of violence" and prohibited under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hitting, shoving or throwing an object at an individual.
- Acts of intimidation including threatening to harm an individual or his/her family, friends, associates, or their property.
- The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of property owned, operated, or controlled by Washington County.
- Making harassing or threatening telephone calls, letters or other form of written or electronic communications.
- Intimidating or attempting to coerce an employee to do wrongful acts that would affect the business interests of the County.

- Harassing surveillance, also know as "stalking", the willful, malicious and acts of intimidation repeated following of another person and making a credible threat with intent to place the other person in reasonable fear of his or her safety.
- Making a suggestion or otherwise intimating that an act to injure persons or property is "appropriate".
- Unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of firearms, weapons, or any other dangerous devices on County property. While some employees of the County may be required as a condition of their work assignment to possess firearms, weapons or other dangerous devices, or permitted to carry them as authorized by law, it is the County's policy that employees use them only in accordance with departmental operating procedures and all applicable State and Federal laws.

REPORTING PROCEDURE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All employees should follow the following procedures; however, in critical incidents in which serious threat or injury occurs, emergency responders such as Police, Fire and/or Ambulance personnel must be immediately notified.

Any employee who believes that he or she has been the target of violence or threats of violence, or has witnessed or otherwise learned of violent conduct by or directed to another employee or other individual must report such incidents to his or her immediate supervisor, a management level supervisory employee if the immediate supervisor is not available, or to the County's Human Resources Division. It is incumbent upon all employees to immediately report such conditions in order for the County to effectively deal with such situations. Supervisory personnel shall take prompt action when they become aware of any aspect of violence in the workplace. Supervisory personnel shall also contact management level supervisors to pursue the appropriate personnel action.

As necessitated by the seriousness of the incident, County management staff may assemble a Crisis Management Team to respond to the incident.

Employees shall refer any questions regarding his/her rights and obligations under this policy to their department management.

VIOLATIONS

Violation by a County employee of a provision of this policy, or false reporting under this policy, may lead to legal action and disciplinary action up to and including termination, as provided in County Personnel Rules and any other County policies and agreements. This policy and any related sanctions are to be deemed supplemental to the County's Personnel Rules and applicable State and Federal laws.

This policy was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on June 15, 1999.