



ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

SECTION: 500 – Health, Safety & Security	PROCEDURE #: 503-A
TITLE: Workplace Violence Prevention	IMPLEMENTS POLICY #: 503
SPONSORING DEPARTMENT: Human Resources	
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/25/2016	REVISED: December 2024

OBJECTIVE: To establish procedures to keep staff and visitors safe and to respond to acts or threats of violence in the workplace.

AUTHORITY: The authority to issue or revise these procedures is reserved to the County Administrator. The County Administrator may authorize exceptions to these procedures when deemed appropriate.

PROCEDURES:

1. **Preventative Measures:**

All Staff

Reporting of concerning behavior is critical to providing needed interventions that prevent acts of targeted violence and help to ensure that all employees remain safe. Staff are required to immediately report the following situations to their manager:

- 1.1. Any behavior that they perceive as threatening or violent in nature, whether or not that behavior is job related and appears that it might be carried out on County property, connected to County employment or directed at a County staff member.
- 1.2. Upon witnessing or becoming aware of any behavior defined as “workplace violence” in Policy 503.
- 1.3. Upon witnessing concerning behaviors by other staff that could be warning signs of someone preparing to commit targeted violence. Examples include:
 - Increasingly erratic, unsafe or aggressive behaviors.
 - Expressions of hostility related to feelings of injustice or perceived wrongdoing.
 - Grievances that involve threats or plans of retribution.
 - Sudden and dramatic changes in personality.

- Distancing from friends and colleagues.
 - Dramatic and unusual changes in work performance.
- 1.4. In order to avoid unintended harm to those who have been historically marginalized, staff should remain aware that objective assessment of concerning behaviors can be influenced by implicit bias.
 - 1.5. Be alert and aware of the surrounding environment when coming and going to and from one's personal vehicle.
 - 1.6. Be cautious of and adhere to County or Department procedures regarding unauthorized persons entering and exiting work areas.

Supervisors and Managers

Department Directors, and supervisors are expected to participate in and lead staff in practicing preventative measures to reduce the risk of workplace violence. Preventative measures are subject to review and approval by the County Administrative Office (CAO), who may decide if others (for example: County Counsel, Facilities, Fleet and Parks Services, Human Resources/Risk Management) should be involved in developing and reviewing suggested measures. The following are examples of preventative measures:

- 1.5 Inform Staff that workplace violence is not tolerated, and any sustained violation of the policy will result in corrective or disciplinary action up to and including termination.
- 1.6 Inform Staff of the expectation to report incidents that are or could be perceived as a threat of workplace violence.
- 1.7 Encourage victims or potential victims of domestic violence to seek assistance from public or community agencies, law enforcement, Human Resources or the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- 1.8 Encourage staff to report the existence of any restraining or protective orders that could affect workplace safety and to seek assistance through the County's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- 1.9 Communicate the importance of workplace safety to staff on a regular basis. Establish a professional and safety-conscious work environment.
- 1.10 Be familiar with and communicate County and Departmental emergency procedures to staff.
- 1.11 Encourage staff to be familiar with their work location and trends in criminal activity in or around the area.
- 1.12 Participate in and encourage staff to attend workplace violence prevention training and training on County policy 301, Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Assault and Retaliation Prevention..

2. Response Procedures:

The most important priority in any emergency is protecting the personal safety of all those involved. In a dynamic, violent situation, the principles of "Run.Hide.Fight." as recommended by the Department of Homeland Security, should be carried out individually and corporately.

Workplace violence typically falls into three general categories, 1) violence has occurred, 2) immediate threat exists, and 3) threat has been made but no immediate danger is apparent. The suggested actions by category are as follows, in the context of the Run.Hide.Fight paradigm:

2.1. Violence Has Occurred:

- 2.1.1. Call 9-1-1 (and/or utilize Duress Alarm if necessary).
- 2.1.2. Evaluate the threat for additional acts of violence, warn other potential victims, inform victims about available medical services and cooperate with law enforcement.
- 2.1.3. Report the incident(s) to supervisors and Department Director as soon as reasonably able to do so. (See Section 2.4 below.)
- 2.1.4. Notify Human Resources at the earliest possible time.
- 2.1.5. Complete a *Workplace Violence Report Form* (see Section 2.5 below) as soon as possible and submit to Human Resources/Risk Management.
- 2.1.6. Human Resources will review the reported incident with department management to determine the appropriate course of action to address the incident and facilitate an immediate response that ensures the safety of all staff.
- 2.1.7. Once the immediate threat has been addressed and the work environment has been secured, Human Resources will initiate an investigation of the incident.
- 2.1.8. Refer any requests for information or interviews from the media to the Washington County Public Information Officer in the County Administrative Office.

2.2. Immediate Threat Exists:

- 2.2.1. Call 9-1-1 (and/or utilize Duress Alarm if necessary).
- 2.2.2. Staff should not put themselves or anyone else at risk during a threat or dangerous situation that is imminent.
- 2.2.3. Report the incident(s) to supervisors and Department Director as soon as reasonably able to do so.
- 2.2.4. Staff should attempt to warn potential targets if possible, and take reasonable actions to immediately exit the area.
- 2.2.5. Complete a *Workplace Violence Report Form* (see Section 2.5 below) as soon as possible and submit to Human Resources/Risk Management.
- 2.2.6. Human Resources will review the reported incident with department management to determine the appropriate course of action to address the incident and facilitate an immediate response to ensure the safety of all staff.
- 2.2.7. Once the immediate threat has been addressed and the work environment has been secured, Human Resources will initiate an investigation of the incident.

2.3. Threat Made, No Immediate Danger Apparent:

- 2.3.1. Staff should immediately report the incident to their supervisor or next in-line

supervisor.

- 2.3.2. If a threat of violence to persons or property is made and there is no imminent danger, notify law enforcement by calling non-emergency dispatch at 503-629-0111. This includes stalking as well as threats made in person or through phone call, voicemail, email, text, or social media platforms.
 - 2.3.3. Supervisors should work with Human Resources to assist in connecting victims or potential victims of stalking and domestic violence with advocates that can provide assistance with safety planning.
 - 2.3.4. A *Workplace Violence Report Form* (see Section 2.5 below) shall be completed as soon as possible and submitted to Human Resources/Risk Management.
 - 2.3.5. Human Resources will review the reported incident with department management to determine the appropriate course of action to address the threat and facilitate an immediate response to ensure the safety of all staff.
 - 2.3.6. Once the immediate threat has been addressed and the work environment has been secured, Human Resources will initiate an investigation of the incident.
 - 2.3.7. Supervisors shall develop a plan of action in collaboration with Human Resources and law enforcement.
- 2.4. Reporting and Follow-up:
- 2.4.1. Staff members who become aware of violent, abusive, or threatening behavior must immediately contact law enforcement by calling 9-1-1 or non-emergency dispatch at 503-629-0111 (if indicated as described above) and report such behavior to their immediate supervisor and Department Director as soon as possible.
 - 2.4.2. The Chief Human Resources Officer or their designee is to be contacted by the supervisor or Department Director by direct or phone contact.
 - 2.4.3. The supervisor or Department Director will direct reporting employee(s) to complete a *Workplace Violence Report Form* and forward the completed report to Human Resources (See Section 2.5 below).
 - 2.4.4. To the extent possible, such reports will be handled confidentially, on a need-to-know basis.
 - 2.4.5. As stated in the Workplace Violence Prevention policy, staff will not be penalized in any way for making a report in good faith, however any staff member who intentionally makes a false allegation or report will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination.
 - 2.4.6. Staff should not assume that the County organization is aware of any possible violent situations and should immediately report all complaints and concerns.
 - 2.4.7. The County Administrator or an Assistant County Administrator shall be notified of all reports under this section by the Chief Human Resources Officer.

2.5. Workplace Violence Report Form:

The *Workplace Violence Report Form* is to be used by staff and witnesses to document and report acts of workplace violence including physical and/or verbal threats. To complete the *Workplace Violence Report Form*:

- 2.5.1. The reporting staff member must complete and sign the *Workplace Violence Report Form* as soon as practical after an incident.
- 2.5.2. The completed report (including any additional pages) shall be placed in a sealed envelope marked “confidential” and hand delivered or sent through interoffice mail to the attention of the Chief Human Resources Officer.
- 2.5.3. Completed reports and any information related to the Report Form will be maintained in a confidential file in Human Resources.

3. **Training.**

3.1 All staff are required to participate in annual workplace violence prevention and response training. The County will make available a workplace violence prevention training program that is designed to inform staff about the definition of workplace violence, types of concerning behaviors that may be warning signs of impending violence and the measures to take when dealing with acts or threats of violence. The Workplace Violence Prevention Policy and corresponding Administrative Procedures will be covered in the training sessions.

3.2 All staff are also required to receive training on [policy 301](#) – **Workplace Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Assault and Retaliation Prevention.**