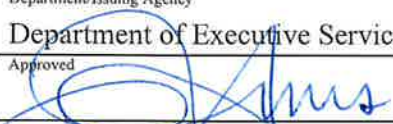




Title WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION	Document Code No. PER 18-8 (AEP)
Department/Issuing Agency Department of Executive Services	Effective Date 9-5-2023
Approved 	

- 1.0 **SUBJECT TITLE:** Workplace Violence Prevention
- 1.1 **EFFECTIVE DATE:**
- 1.2 **TYPE OF ACTION:** New
- 1.3 **KEY WORDS:** Workplace Violence, Domestic Violence, Weapon

2.0 BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for both supervisors and staff when responding to threats, assaults, or other forms of violence in the workplace.

This policy also prohibits executive branch employees from carrying or storing all forms of weapons in the workplace, including impact weapons, electrical weapons, and firearms. This prohibition does not apply to law enforcement or other uniformed personnel who are authorized to carry weapons.

Many County employees interact directly with the public on a daily basis. A commitment to public service comes with many rewards, but can also be very challenging. Sometimes, county employees may encounter individuals who respond to staff in an intimidating, threatening, or dangerous manner. This type of behavior directed at our employees will not be tolerated, and will be dealt with appropriately.

3.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:

All executive branch departments, offices, divisions and agencies. This policy covers all Executive Branch officers and employees.

4.0 REFERENCES

- 4.1 Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 296-800-110, authorizing management to provide a safe and healthy workplace free from recognized hazards.

- 4.2 King County Policy Domestic Violence in the Workplace, PER 18-5 (AP), a policy of no tolerance for acts of domestic violence in the workplace.
- 4.3 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) chapter 9A.76.180, intimidating a public servant.

5.0 DEFINITIONS:

- 5.1 “Workplace Violence” is any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal threats occurring in the work setting. Workplace violence can be perpetrated by strangers, customers or clients, co-workers, personal relations or other non-employees doing business for or with King County. It includes, but is not limited to:
- A. Verbal. Any verbal threat towards persons or property such as being sworn at or shouted at, obscene phone calls.
 - B. Physical. Any physical act such as threatening gestures, spitting, hitting, pushing, kicking, holding, impeding or blocking the movement of another person, beatings, stabbings, suicides, shootings, rapes, an intimidating presence, and stalking.
- 5.2 “Firearms or other dangerous weapons” includes, but is not limited to the following:
- Any device from which a projectile may be fired by an explosive
 - Any simulated firearm operated by gas or compressed air
 - Sling shot
 - Metal knuckles
 - Spring blade knife. Any knife which opens or is ejected open by an outward, downward thrust or movement

6.0 POLICY:

The County’s prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all County employees. Violations of this policy by any covered individual will be followed by appropriate actions up to and including termination of employment.

In no case shall any employee or private person who legitimately reports threats or acts of violence be retaliated against. Any acts of retaliation should be reported immediately to the Division Manager, Department Director, or Department Personnel Officer.

Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in our workplace perpetrated by strangers, customers, co-workers, personal relations or other non-employees doing business for or with King County will not be tolerated; that is, all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.

6.1: Examples of prohibited workplace violence. General examples of prohibited workplace violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 6.1.1 All threats or acts of violence occurring on County property that adversely affect the business interests and goals of the County.
- 6.1.2 All threats or acts of violence not occurring on County property, involving an employee of the County if the threats or acts of violence affect the business interests of the County.
- 6.1.3 All threats or acts of violence not occurring on County property but involving a person acting in the capacity of a representative of the County.
- 6.1.4 Any threats or acts resulting in the conviction of an employee or agent of the County or of an individual performing services on the County's behalf on a contract or temporary basis, under any criminal code provision relating to threats or acts of violence that adversely affect the legitimate interests and goals of the County.

6.2 Examples of inappropriate conduct. Specific examples of conduct that may be considered threats or acts of violence prohibited under this policy include but are not limited to the following:

- 6.2.1 Hitting, grabbing, or shoving an individual;
- 6.2.2 Threatening to harm an individual, his or her family, friends, associates, or their property;
- 6.2.3 The destruction, threat of destruction, or vandalism of property owned, operated, or controlled by the County;
- 6.2.4 Making or participating in harassing or threatening telephone calls, letters, or other forms of written or electronic communication;
- 6.2.5 Intimidating or attempting to coerce an employee to do wrongful acts that would affect the business interests of the County;
- 6.2.6 Harassing surveillance, also known as "stalking". Stalking is defined in RCW 9A.46.110 as:
 - (1) A person commits the crime of stalking if, without lawful authority and under circumstances not amounting to a felony attempt of another crime:
 - (a) He or she intentionally and repeatedly harasses or repeatedly follows another person; and
 - (b) The person being harassed or followed is placed in fear that the stalker intends to injure the person, another person, or property of the person or of another person. The feeling of fear must be one that a reasonable person in the same situation would experience under all the circumstances; and
 - (c) The stalker either:
 - (i) Intends to frighten, intimidate, or harass the person; or
 - (ii) Knows or reasonably should know that the person is afraid, intimidated, or harassed even if the stalker did not intend to place the person in fear or intimidate or harass the person.

6.3 Weapons Prohibited.

This policy prohibits executive branch officers and employees from wearing, transporting, or storing, firearms or other dangerous weapons within County buildings or facilities, in a County vehicle, or on their person while on County business. Any employee in possession of a firearm or other weapon within County buildings or facilities, in a County vehicle, or otherwise fulfilling job responsibilities may face disciplinary action including termination of employment. Possession of a valid concealed weapons permit authorized by the state of Washington is not an exemption under this policy.

6.3.1 Exemptions. This policy does not apply to:

- Law enforcement personnel engaged in official duties
- Security personnel engaged in official duties
- Persons engaged in military activities sponsored by the federal or state government, while engaged in official duties

7.0 RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1 Employee Obligations:

Each employee of the County is required to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he or she is aware, using the Violent Incident/Threat Report Form. Employees should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent when that behavior is job related or appears that it might be carried out on a County site, or is connected to County employment. Employees are required to report the incident regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of threatening behavior.

County employees should make an incident report to their immediate supervisor, and the supervisor should send the report to the Safety and Claims section of the Department of Executive Services Human Resources Division. If the immediate supervisor is not available, or if the threatening individual is the employee's supervisor or manager, the employee should immediately report the incident to another member of management or the Department Director. The manager receiving the incident report should advise the local law enforcement agency if appropriate for further necessary action. Managers may also seek assistance from the Human Resources Division and Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

If any employee has reason to believe that a person outside the workplace might harm the employee in any way, the employee is required to report those concerns to the employee's immediate supervisor, or next level manager if a supervisor is unavailable.

7.2 Department Responsibilities

- 7.2.1 Take reasonable steps to protect employees and others from acts of violence in county facilities or related to county business.
- 7.2.2 Respond to reports of or knowledge of violence.
- 7.2.3 Initiate the investigation process when necessary.
- 7.2.4 If it is determined that an employee has committed an act of violence, notify the law enforcement agency having jurisdiction, if appropriate and take suitable disciplinary action.
- 7.2.5 Keep records of all violence incident reports.
- 7.2.6 Consider using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program as a resource to mediate disputes in the workplace.
- 7.2.7 Develop and make available training on the issues of Workplace Violence for managers and employees. Training could include:
 - Thorough hiring practices to include background checks as necessary
 - Preserving employee's dignity during discipline and termination
 - Improving communication skills of supervisors with emphasis on proper administration of progressive discipline and dealing with terminations and layoffs
 - Dealing with disgruntled citizens and perceived threats
 - Identification of warning signs
 - Personal safety training-how to prepare for and survive acts of workplace violence
 - Stress reduction programs

8.0 INCIDENT RESPONSE PROCEDURE

Immediately after a violent incident or threat occurs, a manager in the affected department should focus first on providing for the medical, psychological, and family needs of affected victims. Other immediate steps that a manager should consider taking, where appropriate, include:

- 8.01 Call 911. Report the incident to the local police department and support law enforcement activities (e.g., crime scene investigation, interviewing witnesses, victims and others).
- 8.02 Assist the victim.
- 8.03 Secure work areas where disturbances occurred.
- 8.04 Account for all employees and others, including those who may still remain in the area where the disturbance occurred.

Additional attention to victims' medical and psychological needs should be considered.

9.0 EMPLOYER INVESTIGATION

After an incident occurs, a detailed investigation is required. All incidents, including threats, should be investigated as soon as possible. The investigation should focus on fact-finding to prevent recurrence.

9.1 Basic information that should be gathered on incidents

- 9.1.1 Who was threatened
- 9.1.2 Who made the threat
- 9.1.3 Witness statements
- 9.1.4 Any previous incidents involving the victim and person making the threat
- 9.1.5 What is the relationship between the victim and the threat maker
- 9.1.6 What was the threat
- 9.1.7 What were the circumstances surrounding the threat, including events leading up to the threat
- 9.1.8 When, where, and how was the threat made
- 9.1.9 When, where and how was the threat to be carried out
- 9.1.10 Information solicited from the person who made the threat
- 9.1.11 Overall incident review to determine how the County handled the situation and what changes or improvements could be implemented. This should be done only after initial legal review and approval.

9.2 Important Records to Keep

- 9.2.1 Log of injuries and illnesses
- 9.2.2 Medical reports of worker injury; reports for each recorded assault
- 9.2.3 Incidents of assault and threats of violence
- 9.2.4 Information on customers with a history of past violence
(Share with employees who need to know)
- 9.2.5 Minutes of safety meetings
- 9.2.6 Records of hazard analyses and corrective actions recommended, and documentation of implementation of recommendations
- 9.2.7 Records of relevant training conducted, attendees, and qualification of trainers
- 9.2.8 Violent Incident/Threat Report Form

**PREVENTING AND DEALING WITH WORKPLACE VIOLENCE:
A MANAGER'S CHECKLIST**

1. Treat employees with respect and dignity. If needed, provide counseling or EAP assistance to affected employees. Implement thorough hiring practices and perform reference checks on all prospective employees prior to hiring.
2. Establish a standard of acceptable behavior in the workplace.
3. Encourage your employees and customers to report threats or incidents of workplace violence.
4. When faced with a threat, document receipt of the threat and the behavior that was exhibited.
5. Document your response and your handling of the situation.
6. Notify your Division Manager/Department Director.
7. Consult with the Human Resources Division, the Prosecuting Attorney's Office and the EAP if needed.
8. Consider using the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Program to resolve disputes in your workplace.
9. Assess the threat and necessary level of intervention.
10. If applicable, notify threatened personnel.
11. Develop a security plan that considers different scenarios.
12. Follow up with the problem until it has been resolved and the threat has been eliminated.

Possible Warning Signs

This list is intended to identify warning signs. It is not intended to identify specific individuals. If any individual deviates from baseline behavior and begins to exhibit some of these warning signs, the supervisor should take notice and address employee concerns.

1. History of physical and verbal intimidation.
2. History of violence and interpersonal conflict with co-workers and supervisors.
3. Sense of persecution and injustice. Believes the world is out to get them. (Exhibits paranoid behavior).
4. Direct or veiled threats of harm.
5. Sense of entitlement. The world owes them.
6. Moral righteousness, extremist opinions and attitudes. Believes the County doesn't follow its own policies and procedures.
7. Holds grudges, especially against supervisors and the County. Verbalized hope that something bad will happen to the person against whom they have a grudge.
8. Unable to take criticism of job performance.
9. Fascination with incidents of workplace violence. Empathy for the perpetrator.
10. Interest in weapons and their killing power. Carrying a concealed weapon or flashing a weapon to test responses.
11. Obsessive involvement with the job, often with uneven job performance and no apparent outside interest.
12. A loner with decreased social interests. Possible romantic obsession with a co-worker.
13. Disregard for the well being and safety of co-workers.
14. Recent termination or lay-off, or the perception this may happen.
15. Family, finances, or health stress.
16. Likely substance abuse problem.

Effective Date: 9-15-03 PER 18-8 (AEP)

Page 8 of 9

VIOLENT INCIDENT/THREAT REPORT FORM

Date of Report: __/__/__ Incident Date __/__/__ Name of Person Reporting

Department/Division _____ Work

Phone: _____

Did you witness the incident? Yes No Other witnesses: Name _____

Phone _____

Victim Name: _____ Gender: Male Female

Victim Description:

Employee Employee's Department/Division/Job Title: _____
 Client Visitor

Location of Incident/Threat

Supervisor Name: _____

Has Supervisor been notified? Yes No

Describe the violent incident or threat:

Was a firearm involved? If yes, describe:

Was a weapon involved? If yes, describe:

Was the victim injured? If yes, describe:

Did victim receive medical attention? If yes, describe:

Suspect Name (if known):

Address (if known) _____ Phone (if known) _____

Effective Date: 9-15-03 PER 18-8 (AEP)

What was his/her relationship to the victim?

Stranger Co-worker Personal Relation Supervisor Client/Patient/Customer Other _____

Suspect's gender: Male Female

Description of suspect: Hair Color _____ Eye Color _____ Age _____

Height _____ Weight _____ Distinguishing Features _____

Clothing _____

Additional Comments: