



Subject: Workplace Violence
Effective Date: 6/29/2017
Department: Human Resources
Revised Date: [Policy Revised Date]

Revision: 4
Policy Number: HRM-724
Rescinded Date: [Policy Rescinded Date]

To All City Employees:

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish procedures to respond to reports of potential threats, violence or activities that may provoke violence. It is the obligation of every employee to contribute to the safety of the work environment.

II. Policy

It is a policy of the City of Durham to provide a safe and secure workplace to carry out the mission of the City of Durham. The City of Durham and its employees are committed to working together to create and maintain a workplace that is free from violence, intimidation, bullying and other disruptive behaviors.

The City of Durham prohibits acts of intimidation as well as actual or threatened violence against co-workers, visitors, or any other persons who are either on City property or have contact with City employees in the course of their duties. The following types of behaviors are examples of violations of City policy:

- Unwelcome name-calling, obscene language, and other abusive behavior.
- Intimidation through direct or veiled verbal threats.
- Throwing objects in the workplace regardless of the size or type of object being thrown, or whether a person is the target of the thrown object.
- Physically attacking another person in an intimidating, malicious, or harassing manner, including such acts as hitting, slapping, poking, kicking, pinching, grabbing, and pushing.
- Physically intimidating others including such acts as obscene gestures, shouting

III. Definitions

Act of Violence – an intentional act that causes bodily harm, however slight, to another person or damage to the property of another.

Active Assailant – an individual actively engaged in killing or attempting to kill people in a confined and populated area.

Bullying – repeated, unreasonable actions of an individual (or a group) directed towards an employee (or group of employees), which intimidates and creates a risk to the physical and/or emotional health and safety of the employee(s). Bullying is unwanted offensive and malicious behavior which undermines an individual or group through persistently negative attacks.

Intimidation – to compel or deter by or as if by threats; includes but is not limited to unwarranted behavior intended to frighten, coerce, or induce duress.

Physical attack – unwanted or hostile physical contact including but not limited to hitting, fighting, shoving, restraining, or throwing objects.

Property damage – intentional damage to property, includes property owned by the City of Durham and City of Durham employees.

Stalking – unwanted or obsessive attention by an individual or group towards another person. May include repeated following of the victim in person or monitoring them electronically.

Threat – the expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry out the threat and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional, or future.

Weapon – any objects that may be used to intimidate, attack, or injure another person or to damage property.

Workplace Violence – includes, but is not limited to intimidation, stalking, threats, physical attack, property damage.

IV. Procedure

A. General

1. Security and safety in the workplace require the cooperation of every staff employee. Any City of Durham employee who is the subject of, or a witness to, a suspected violation of this policy is strongly encouraged to report the violation to the next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation.
2. Any emergency, perceived emergency, or suspected criminal conduct shall be immediately reported to the Durham Police Department.
3. Any supervisor, manager, or other person in authority who receives a report of a suspected violation of this policy shall investigate the suspected violation and shall consult with the Human Resources Department as appropriate. The results of the investigation shall be reported by the investigator to his/her next-in-line supervisor and to the Human Resources Department.
4. Any City employee found to be in violation of this policy shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal, pursuant to applicable Personnel Policies and, if appropriate, shall be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.
5. No employee shall be retaliated against in his/her employment for reporting intimidation, bullying, threats or acts of violence.

B. Weapons on City Property

Durham City Code Section 46-22 prohibits a person from openly possessing a dangerous weapon while on City Property. The ordinance defines a dangerous weapon as any firearm, pump gun, air rifle, air pistol, BB gun, crossbow, bow and arrow, bowie knife, dirk, dagger, slingshot, loaded cane, metallic knuckles, razor, shuriken, stun gun, switch blade knife, black jack, or any other weapon of like kind. A pocket knife is excluded from the ordinance prohibitions.

The ordinance defines City property to include property owned or leased by the City such as City buildings, their grounds, and City parking garages and lots.

Employees, other than sworn law enforcement officers, should not be openly carrying a firearm or other weapon in City buildings, their grounds and City parking facilities unless the weapon is a pocket knife.

Employees are permitted to have a long gun that is locked in a gun rack within an attended motor vehicle or an unattended but locked motor vehicle on City property. It is

unlawful to carry a concealed handgun with a concealed handgun permit into a City building, on its premises, or into a City parking facility. Handguns with a valid permit should be secured in the trunk, glove box or enclosed compartment within a locked vehicle when the vehicle is on City property.

C. Active Assailant Procedures

Please see [S-208 Active Assailant Plan](#) for information on active assailant procedures.

D. Employee Responsibilities

All City of Durham employees (regardless of status) are required to adhere to this policy. It is the responsibility of every City employee to assist and cooperate in making the workplace as safe and secure as possible.

- Any conduct or “jokes” which involve intimidation and/or threats are inappropriate and will be taken seriously.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to report any perceived violation of the Workplace Violence Policy within 24 hours or one business day to their next-in-line supervisor who is not a party to the violation. No employee shall be subjected to criticism, reprisal, retaliation or disciplinary action for **good faith** reporting pursuant to this policy.
- Employees who are the subject of, or witnesses to, a possible violation of this policy may be requested by management to document their experience or observations in order to facilitate the handling of the situation.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to report restraining orders or domestic violence protection orders to the Durham Police Department and to their supervisors when those orders affect the workplace.

E. Supervisor Responsibilities

All City of Durham supervisory employees are required to adhere to this policy. Supervisors have a crucial role in making the City a safe and secure working environment by reducing the potential for employee workplace violence through training, appropriate and consistent use of sound supervisory practices and by applying timely corrective action when necessary.

- Act promptly and effectively to stop behaviors that may be perceived as workplace violence.

- It is the responsibility of all supervisors to investigate and report the results of their investigations into alleged violations of this policy to their next-in-line supervisor and to consult with the Human Resources Department on potential employee workplace violence situations as appropriate.
- Supervisors shall document all violations of the Workplace Violence Policy in order that appropriate corrective action can be administered.

F. Management Responsibilities

All City of Durham management employees are required to adhere to this policy and to ensure that those they manage are aware of and accountable for adhering to this policy.

The issues surrounding employee workplace violence can be complex and difficult to assess. Therefore, department managers are encouraged to consult with available City resources including, but not limited to, the Durham Police Department, Human Resources, and the City's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) vendor.

Consultation with these resources will greatly assist management in identifying intervention strategies that may minimize or avert potentially violent situations. Such intervention(s) may include:

- Supervisory action to address performance problems and inappropriate conduct
- Corrective action or dismissal
- Professional employee counseling through the EAP and other available referral services
- Medical and/or psychological evaluation to determine fitness for duty.

Managers are also responsible for developing and implementing departmental safety plans to be included as part of the department Emergency Management Plan.

G. Incident Management

The degree to which employees are able to survive an actual act of violence in the workplace may depend greatly upon recognition of potential problems and the measures taken in advance of an incident.

Following are the basic building blocks for the development of a departmental safety plan, to be included as part of department Emergency Management Plans:

- Identify the physical security needs of the department
- Discuss and coordinate emergency strategies with department employees
- To the extent possible, arrange for limited and authorized access to the affected work area
- Establish protocol for calling the Police (emergency/non-emergency)
- Develop prearranged office procedures to alert others to the need for help
- Develop a procedure to cease normal operations and secure the premises
- Outline emergency evacuation procedures
- Evaluate the need for security alarm, panic button, surveillance cameras, security personnel, etc.

Workplace violence incidents will differ greatly and each situation will dictate a different response. The particular circumstances of a given situation will suggest which of, and in which order, the following should occur:

- Only when safe to do so activate the Electronic Notification System by dialing #91 on your Cisco telephones and dial 9-1-1 (from your cell phone) or 9-9-1-1 (from your desk phone)
- Report to the Police by dialing 9-1-1 at the safest opportunity
- Alert others (signals, codes, alarms)
- Activate prearranged safety and security plan
- Secure surroundings, lock doors
- If appropriate, evacuate employees/leave the area

H. Managing the Aftermath of an Incident

Police and other emergency response personnel will be available to manage all emergencies. Police will deal with criminal activity. However, it remains the responsibility of City employees, supervisors and managers to work together to try to normalize the workplace following an incident.

The aftermath of a violent situation can be traumatic, characterized by confusion and disorientation. The wave of uncertainty, panic and disbelief will pass and in its place will be the task of normalizing the workplace. Depending on the severity of the incident the

Human Resources Department will normally coordinate post incident normalization. Under most circumstances, this will include the involvement of the City's EAP.

Managers will be expected to take the lead in initiating and participating in debriefings following a violent act, normally within 24 hours of an incident.

Durham Emergency Communications 9-1-1

Durham Police Department (919) 560-4322

Human Resources Department (919) 560-4214

EAP Vendor - GuidanceResources (855) 271-6932

V. Other

A. Workplace Violence – Behaviors and Characteristics

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of these warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent, but they do not necessarily indicate that an individual will become violent. A display of these signs should trigger concern as they are usually exhibited by people experiencing problems.

- Verbal, nonverbal, or intimidation, explicit or subtle written threats
- Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence – carrying a concealed weapon.
- Expression of a plan to hurt self/others
- Fear reaction to employee among coworkers/clients
- Expression of extreme desperation over family, financial or personal problems
- Frequent interpersonal conflicts
- Unable to take criticism of job performance
- Displays of unwarranted anger
- Moral righteousness – believing the organization is not following its rules
- Violence toward inanimate objects Sabotaging projects, computer programs or equipment
- Holding a grudge against a specific person; verbalizing a hope that something will happen to him/her

Another type of workplace violence may occur when an individual becomes romantically obsessed with someone who does not reciprocate the romantic feelings. The obsession

is irrational and the subject does not respond to the victim's attempts to set limits or to end the attachment. Obsessed individuals have sometimes been known to be a threat to the safety of the individual with whom they are obsessed. If you believe that you are being stalked or that someone has an obsessive attachment to you, you should notify the Durham Police Department.

Those who witness these warning signs are strongly encouraged to inform their supervisors. Managers and supervisors are encouraged to consult with the Human Resources Department and/or Durham Police Department to attempt to prevent a difficult situation from escalating into violence.

B. Strategies to De-Escalate Threatening Behavior

The following conflict resolution strategies may be helpful to de-escalate situations where an individual is exhibiting threatening or intimidating behavior:

- Project calmness, move and speak slowly, quietly and confidently
- Encourage the person to talk; listen closely and patiently
- Maintain a relaxed but attentive posture
- Position yourself at an angle to the person rather than directly in front
- Arrange yourself so your access to emergency exits is not blocked
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- Ask for small, specific favors such as asking the person to move to a quieter area, or to move outside
- Use delaying tactics to give the person time to calm down, such as offering a drink of water (in a paper cup)
- Point out choices, break big problems into smaller ones
- Avoid sudden movements and maintain 3-6 foot distance
- Call the police when it is safe to do so
- Call the Human Resources Department when the person has left.

VI. Attachments

[Policy Attachments]

Attachment A: Workplace Violence Investigation Guidelines

Attachment B: Workplace Violence Investigation Report Template

Attachment C: Potential Signs of Workplace Violence and Bullying

[WPV Behaviors.docx](#)

[WPV Investigation Guidelines.docx](#)

[WPV Investigation Report Template.docx](#)