

Workplace Violence Policy

1.0 POLICY STATEMENT: Managing critical workplace incidents, primarily those dealing with actual or potential violence, is a top priority of the City. These are among the most sensitive issues faced by managers and supervisors. These issues involve delicate balances between rights, responsibilities and compelling organizational needs such as employee and public safety and the continued performance of required duties. For these reasons the City is committed to providing a coordinated and rapid response to such incidents.

2.0 PROCEDURES: Violence, or the threat of violence, has no place in any of the City's work locations. It is the goal of the City to rid worksites of violent behavior or the threat of such behavior. It is the shared obligation of all employees, law enforcement agencies, and employee organizations to individually and jointly act to prevent or defuse actual or implied violent behavior at work.

Violence, or the threat of violence, by or against any employee of the City and/or other person is unacceptable and contrary to City policies and will subject the perpetrator to serious disciplinary action and possible criminal charges. The City will work with law enforcement to aid in the prosecution of any one inside or outside of the organization who commits violent acts against any person.

Possession, use, or threat of use, of a deadly weapon, including but not limited to all firearms, is not permitted at work, or on City property, including in a City vehicle, unless such possession or use of a weapon is a necessary and approved requirement of the job.

No employee acting in good faith, who reports real or implied violent behavior will be subject to retaliation or harassment based upon their report.

2.1 Definitions - Workplace violence includes but is not limited to, harassment, threats, physical attack or property damage.

Threat - is the expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm, whether that expression is made orally, in writing, or through other means. Such an expression may constitute a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to

carry it out and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional or future.

Physical Attack - is unwanted or hostile physical contact or attempted contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving or throwing objects.

Property Damage - is intentional damage to property which includes but is not limited to property owned by the City, employees, visitors or vendors.

- 2.2 *Threats or Violent Activities* - The following activities, which are not all inclusive, are considered to be threats or violence. Employees engaging in such activities are in violation of the City's anti-violence policy, which may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.
- 2.2.1 Physical harm or beatings resulting in injury or death.
 - 2.2.2 Psychological trauma due to verbalized threats, stalking, etc.
 - 2.2.3 Property damage due to violence.
 - 2.2.4 Property theft due to violence directed toward the employer.
 - 2.2.5 Homicide
 - 2.2.6 Rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or sexual abuse.
 - 2.2.7 Strangulation.
 - 2.2.8 Gun shot wounds.
 - 2.2.9 Stabbing.
 - 2.2.10 Verbal abuse.
 - 2.2.11 Harassment which may result in creating an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.
- 2.3 *Search and Seizure* - The City of Johnson City reserves the right to search the employee's work area, locker, and desk if it deems such action necessary due to violence or threatening violence and seize any items deemed necessary.
- 2.4 *Reporting Threats* - Employees and others can report threats directly to their supervisor, department head or Human Resources Director. All department heads are to advise the staff attorney and City Manager of any threat reported to them. The City Manager will determine if an investigation is necessary and direct Department Heads accordingly.
- 2.5 *Training and Development* - The Human Resources Department will develop training and development activities for all employees to

communicate city policy and train employees and supervisors in the prevention of workplace violence.

- 2.6 *Early Warning Signs of Workplace Harassment* - Workplace violence is difficult to predict in terms of specifically, which employees will commit aggressive acts. However, we can identify some early warning signs that may indicate a tendency to workplace violence.
- 2.7 Sudden personality changes.
 - 2.7.1 Job performance suddenly becomes more erratic.
 - 2.7.2 Employee makes open comments about being treated badly, wanting to strike back.
 - 2.7.3 Behavior that suddenly turns more aggressive, such as bullying, intimidating behavior toward supervisors or fellow workers.
 - 2.7.4 Showing off, commenting or actually brandishing a weapon.
 - 2.7.5 Bizarre thoughts spoken aloud, often stemming from a sense that he/she should have been promoted, transferred or is entitled to other advancement.
 - 2.7.6 Obsessions, such as nursing a grudge against a co-worker or supervisor, or from frustrated romantic interests.
 - 2.7.7 Employee is involved in frequent disputes with co-workers or supervisors.
 - 2.7.8 Employee routinely violates City policy.

Installation Program for Prevention of Workplace Violence

- 2.7 *Policy Development and Communication* - Conduct a needs assessment of each department, especially those that deal with money or have more contact with the public, such departments as Finance, Building and Transit. During this evaluation we will discuss an action plan for each department on how they will communicate with supervision or the police department in case of emergency such as alarm panic buttons, direct calling, 911 or other alternatives.
- 2.8 *Training*
 - 2.8.1 *Policy Communication* - During the training process each department will be given a copy of the policy along with each person being given an opportunity to attend the training programs that will discuss in detail what the policy states.

- 2.8.2 Workplace Violence Seminar - Training seminar that talks about situations conducive to violence, personal profiles of potentially violent people, warning signs of potentially dangerous situations, statistics, violence preventive measures and methods available for dealing with dangerous situations.
- 2.8.3 Conflict Resolution Seminar - The purpose of this course is to discover methods of problem solving which allows for human differences and establishes respect for those differences. Other objectives are to learn to accept human differences, to be assertive and not fear confrontation. To acquire and use problem solving skills at times when there are different opinions. To learn methods to limit conflict and promote mediation and to learn greater self control and anger management.
- 2.8.4 Customer Service - Dealing with Angry Customers - This course is designed to build and maintain the critical skills necessary to be dynamic and successful service professionals. You will gain insight on customer behavior and attitudes, and how to develop strategies to create positive customer relationships.
- 2.8.5 Self-Protection Training - Is a course taught by the Police Department for employees to defend themselves regardless of age, size or physical ability. A lecture will be given along with a demonstration of body movements and how to use objects for protection. Employees will have an opportunity to participate.
- 2.8.6 Diversity Seminar - This training course is designed to help employees deal constructively with the changing workforce, and to do so in a non-threatening environment. You will examine cultural backgrounds, learn how to recognize how cultural differences may impact behavior and in turn this will help the employee to work effectively in a multicultural environment.
- 2.8.7 Critical Incident Training - This course is designed to develop awareness of potential work place violence situations. To help evaluate work sites, prevention and other hazardous situations that could occur.

2.9 *Security Needs Assessment*

Each department will be visited to find out what kind, if any, security system they have in place at their particular work sites. If there are none, then an assessment will be conducted to see what it will take to get a plan installed depending on the need of the workplace.

2.9 *911 – Call Conformation Exercise and Training*

This exercise will be conducted in each department with every telephone. The purpose is to make sure if 911 has to be called, then the number that they get on the monitor is coming from the exact station in which the call is made and not just any location.

3.0 RESPONSIBILITY: The Human Resources Director is responsible for the administration and communication of this policy.

APPROVED:

M. Denis Peterson
City Manager

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