

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY

### Purpose

Town of Howard is committed to the safety and security of our employees. Workplace violence presents a serious occupational safety hazard to our agency, staff and clients. Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on Town of Howard property will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken, including summoning criminal justice authorities when warranted. All employees are responsible for helping to create an environment of mutual respect for each other as well as clients, following all policies, procedures and program requirements, and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

Town of Howard is committed to protecting all people from violence or the threat of violence against employees, customers, or vendors. Any Town employee, customer, or vendor may not use violence or the threat of violence while performing work, conducting business, or visiting Town premises. All employees will participate in the annual Workplace Violence Prevention Training Program.

### Scope of Policy

This Policy applies to all Town employees and all personnel in a contractual or other business relationship with the Town including, for example, applicants, temporary or leased employees, independent contractors, vendors, consultants, volunteers and visitors. Depending on the extent of the Town's exercise of control, this Policy may be applied to the conduct of non-employees with respect to treatment of Town employees in the workplace. This Policy applies with equal force on Town property as it does at Town-sponsored events, programs, and activities which take place off Town premises.

**Policy Objectives** By adopting and publishing this Policy, it is the intention of the Town to:

1. Provide safety education for employees so they know what conduct is not acceptable, what to do if they witness or are subjected to workplace violence, and how to protect themselves.
2. Inform employees about notification procedures established by the Town which enable any employee who believes (s)he is the victim of workplace violence to submit a complaint which will be investigated by the Town.
3. Secure the workplace with lighting, metal detectors, and alarm systems, where appropriate. Ensure appropriate access by public through use of employee ID badges and guards.
4. Where applicable limit the amount of cash on hand.
5. Provide field staff with cell phones, require them to prepare a daily work plan, and inform a contact person of their location throughout the day. Keep employer-provided vehicles properly maintained.
6. Instruct employees not to enter any location where they feel unsafe.
7. Take threats seriously. Respond to reports by individuals. Call 911 where there is threat of bodily harm.

### Definitions

1. Crime of Violence or Violence: Includes any degree of murder, voluntary manslaughter, aggravated rape, rape, mayhem, especially aggravated robbery, robbery, burglary, aggravated assault, assault, physical or verbal threats and batter.
2. Weapon: Includes an explosive or an explosive weapon, a machine gun, a short-barrel rifle or shotgun, a handgun, a firearm silencer, a switchblade knife or any other type of knife, or knuckles, or any other implement for infliction of bodily injury, serious bodily injury or death that has no common lawful purpose.
3. Bullying: Workplace bullying is the repeated less favorable treatment of a person by another or others, which may be considered unreasonable and inappropriate workplace practice. Workplace bullying is behavior that can intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate an employee.
4. Work Site: Includes all Town property, owned or operated by the Town or in a Town vehicle.
5. Reporting: An employee who witnesses an incident of violence or threatening language or conduct must promptly report the incident to his or her supervisor or the Risk Manager.
6. Discipline: An employee who violates this Policy by engaging in violent conduct or bringing a weapon into the workplace may be subject to discipline, up to and including reprimand, fine, suspension, demotion or termination.

### Policy

Town of Howard has a strong commitment to its employees to provide a safe, healthy and secure work environment. The Town expects employees to maintain a high level of productivity and efficiency. The threat of violence, occurrence of violence and the presence of weapons in the workplace during work hours otherwise are inconsistent with these

violence and the presence of weapons in the workplace during work hours otherwise are inconsistent with these objectives. The Town expects all employees to report to the work site without possessing weapons and to perform their job without violence toward any other individual. Likewise, employees will perform their job without being subject to workplace violence.

#### **Examples of Prohibited Activities**

Town of Howard specifically prohibits the following and will routinely discipline an employee, up to and including termination for any of the following:

1. Use, possession, or sale of any weapon
2. Storing any weapon in a desk, locker, vehicles, lunch box, tool kit, bag, purse, or any other method of concealing on the work site or other Town location.
3. Refusing to submit to an inspection for the presence of a weapon, when requested by Town.
4. Refusing to sign a statement to comply with the Town's Policy on Workplace Violence.
5. Refusing to participate in an investigation pertaining to allegations or suspicion that violence has or is like to occur, or an investigation pertaining to the carrying of a weapon by the employee or a co-employee.
6. Verbal or physical threats, threatening gestures or statements.
7. Fighting
8. Bullying

#### **Examples of Protected Activity**

Includes but may not be limited to:

1. Complained/reported a problem with discrimination, including sexual harassment and all other categories (race and national origin, age, gender, pregnancy, disability, and religion)
2. Complained/reported safety issues
3. Requested accommodations of a disability
4. Filed workers compensation claim
5. Served as a witness at an unemployment hearing
6. Were a whistleblower
7. Refused to violate the law or a code of ethics
8. Sued the Town under certain laws such as the discrimination laws, whistleblower laws and benefit-related laws
9. Any good faith communication that discloses or demonstrates an intention to disclose information that may evidence either 1) an improper governmental activity or 2) any condition that may significantly threaten the health or safety of employees or the public if the disclosure or intention to disclose was made for the purpose of remedying that condition.

#### **Procedures**

Note that the confidentiality of the employee making the good faith disclosure will be maintained, unless it becomes necessary to disclose the identity to conduct a thorough investigation, to comply with the laws and to provide the accused individual(s) their legal rights of defense. All reports of illegal and dishonest activities should be promptly submitted to the supervisor, department head, elected official or Personnel Department. At any time before the complaint is fully resolved, the complainant may submit a request to the responsible supervisor, department head, elected official, the Risk Manager or the Personnel Department to take interim actions to protect the complainant against any adverse action. The Department in which the employee is working, the Risk Manager or the Personnel Department is responsible for investigating and coordinating any Corrective action.

#### **EFFECTIVE DATE AND POLICY DISSEMINATION**

The effective date of this Policy shall be January 1, 2012, Town of Howard shall ensure that this Policy is adequately disseminated and made available to all employees of the Town. In addition, copies of this Policy and Complaint Form shall be maintained in the Administrative Code and employee Bulletin Board, found on the intranet.

#### **PROHIBITION AGAINST RETALIATION**

Retaliation is strictly prohibited as put forth in the Non-Retaliation Policy of Town of Howard. Complaints of retaliation should be brought directly to a supervisor, the Risk Manager or the Personnel Department.