



Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

Policy Number: PP 8-2

Effective Date: September 30, 1999

Approved By: Chris Blue, Town Manager

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POLICY

The Town of Chapel Hill is concerned with the safety of both employees and the public. We strive to maintain a workplace that is free of violence. We believe that it is the obligation of every employee to contribute to the safety of the work environment by refraining from threats, violence, or activities that may provoke violence. All Town staff should report threats and conduct Town business with respect for all Town employees and for all customers of Town services.

PURPOSE

To promote a safe workplace, we require the reporting of possible internal and external threats to the safety of employees and citizens. To facilitate workplace safety, we provide procedures to respond to threats and/or acts of violence and continue to educate all employees in ways to prevent violence.

R.E.S.P.E.C.T. VALUES



Safety: We strive to maintain our own mental and physical well-being and the well-being of those around us. We are dedicated to a work environment that minimizes risk of injury or accident. We are also dedicated to an environment that provides for honest and courteous discussion of workplace issues without fear of repercussion.

APPROVAL

Chris Blue, Town Manager



Workplace Violence Prevention Procedures

Policy Number: PP 8-2

Effective Date: September 30, 1999

Approved By: Anita Badrock, Interim Human Resources Development Director

PROCEDURES

Alleged workplace violence is considered a serious incident and must be immediately reported to the Department Head and handled in alignment with the Town's Serious Incident policy.

APPLICABILITY:

This policy applies to all Town employees, including regular and contract, and covers employees while engaged in any activity related to their employment with the Town, whether on Town property or elsewhere.

The policy does not include actions related to or situations arising out of actions which are a necessary part of the performance of one's job. For example, fire, police and other first response employees acting with an appropriate use of force in the line of duty are exempt from this policy.

Some types of workplace behavior may be inappropriate but do not constitute workplace violence as defined in this policy. For example:

- Inappropriate contact of a sexual nature is addressed under the Town's [Anti-Harassment Policy](#) rather than under this policy.
- Incidents of bullying or inappropriate horseplay are addressed under the Personnel Ordinance's sections on Unsatisfactory Job Performance or Detrimental Personal Conduct.
- Incidents of the use of excessive force in the course of the jobs of emergency personnel are handled under the Personnel Ordinance of Detrimental Personal Conduct and/or through the applicable department's policies and procedures.

WHEN INCIDENTS OCCUR:

- It is a violation of the Town's ordinances and this policy to:
- engage in threats, intimidation, physical attacks, and other forms of workplace violence as defined in this policy; or
- use and/or possess an unauthorized weapon during worktime, while carrying out their duties, representing the Town, or while in any place related to the individual's employment.
- An employee who believes that they have been the target of workplace violence should report the incident to the appropriate supervisor or manager, to the Police Crisis Intervention unit, or to the Human Resource Development Department (HRD). In emergency situations the employees should call the Police at 911.

TOWN RESPONSE TO ACTS OF VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE:

Some incidents may require a straightforward investigation with minimum complexity and may be responded to by a brief investigation with the involved parties and witnesses. Others require a more thorough investigation and may involve the Town Manager, Town Attorney, Police Chief, or designee, HRD staff, and others as may be needed to determine and provide the appropriate response.

The kinds of incidents requiring investigation and further response include, but are not limited to:

- the display of threatening behavior - For example, a weapon is shown or explicit threats are made against specified individuals.
- a physical attack occurs between one or more employees, while carrying out their duties or representing the Town. These actions include, but are not limited to, fights, shootings, and stabbings.
- other behaviors that show an employee is crossing the boundary between physical interaction that is respectful (i.e. appropriate to the situation and does not cause harm to oneself or others in the workplace) and what is not. For example: "horseplay" with a violent edge, continued picking on a co-worker, a pattern of aggressive and hostile response to supervisors and co-workers; situations when violence is imminent; employees threatening each other; bullying when the victim feels that the offending party may harm them, or that the bullying could cause or has caused an injury; harassment of another person; Intimidation of another employee.

All behaviors which are considered or may be considered criminal acts should be reported to the Police; Police investigations may supplement or supersede administrative procedures.

In all cases, supervisors are encouraged to seek advice from the HRD staff in how to handle and diffuse situations. A Workplace Violence Reporting Form is available for recording information about workplace violence incidents. (See [Forms Section below](#).)

POLICY VIOLATIONS AND RESPONSE

Town staff should communicate and enforce an atmosphere of zero tolerance for violence in the workplace and quick response to these incidents.

A violation of this policy will be considered detrimental personal conduct as outlined in the Town of Chapel Hill Personnel Ordinance. A physical attack on any employee combined with the use of a weapon, will be handled in accordance with the Town's disciplinary process and may subject an employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Similarly, any physical attack, whether in self-defense, with or without a weapon, intentional acts resulting in property damage-, will be handled in accordance with the Town's disciplinary process and may also result in disciplinary action, up to, and including, termination. Other substantiated violations, including threats and harassment, will subject employees to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

FORMS/INSTRUCTIONS

[Workplace Violence Incident Reporting Form](#)

PROCEDURES
APPROVED BY

Anita Badrock, 
Interim Human Resources Development Director

ADDITIONAL
CONTACTS

Human Resource Development 919-968-2700 or HR@townofchapelhill.org
Ombuds office 919-265-0806 or Ombuds@townofchapelhill.org

DEFINITIONS

Intimidation: includes, but is not limited to, threats, stalking or engaging in actions intended to frighten or coerce the other person.

Physical Attack: unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving, throwing objects, grabbing, holding, touching, or any other unwelcomed physical contact (more information available in policy [PP5-1, Anti-Harassment Policy](#)). A physical attack does not include physical contact which is performed during an employee's Town responsibilities. In determining whether physical contact constitutes a physical attack, the totality of circumstances will be considered by the appropriate supervisor or manager involved, and by the Human Resources Development Department.

Property Damage: intentional damage to property which includes property owned by the Town, employees, visitors, or vendors.

Threat: the expression of an 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 it out without regard to the overt or subtle nature of the expression, and without regard to whether the expression is made on a present, conditional, or future basis. In determining whether the action was intended as a threat, the totality of circumstances will be considered by the appropriate supervisor or manager involved, and by the Human Resources Development Department.

Weapon: any object used to attack or intimidate another. Prohibited weapons include, but are not limited to, firearms, explosives, ammunition, knives, pocketknives, switchblades, or other dangerous or deadly weapons. Use of other items as weapons (such as tools or furniture) is also prohibited. Tools used in the course of duty, such as axes, hammers, and similar instruments, are considered weapons when used to threaten or attack others.

Workplace violence: includes, but is not limited to, intimidation, threats, physical attack, unauthorized weapons, or property damage.

RESPONSIBILITIES

1. **Supervisors and management** have two key roles under this policy - prevention and incident response:

(a) *prevention* of violence in the workplace:

Early recognition of a potentially threatening or violent situation is the key to protecting employees and the public from violence. The Town will train managers, supervisors, and employees to understand what workplace violence includes and to recognize the signs of a potentially violent situation. Each supervisor is expected to learn the steps to prevent incidents of workplace violence and the measures to be taken if such an incident occurs.

Vigilance to signs of potentials for violence may prevent a future incident. Supervisors should encourage employees to seek help for problems which may lead to an act of violence or aggression. The Employee Assistance Program is a source for confidential and free counseling and referral services for Town employees and their dependents.

(b) *response* to a report of violence:

Supervisors, when notified of an incident, should respond in a prompt and effective manner. The types of acts above would trigger the serious incident policy and would require the Manager's Office to sign off on how the investigation takes place and who should be conducting it.

Incidents involving non-employees (for example, involving a spouse or member of the public making threats against an employee) should be taken seriously and followed up on just as incidents with Town employees. For these types of incidents, the employee should notify their supervisor and Human Resources Development Department, and contact police to file a report if appropriate. Workplace Security should also be notified, if appropriate.

2. **Each employee** has the personal responsibility to abide by this Workplace Violence Prevention policy every time they come to work. In addition, every employee has the responsibility to report any suspicion or knowledge of a current or potential incident of workplace violence to a Town supervisor.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all employees.

POLICY HISTORY

This policy replaces and supersedes any previous Town policies, departmental policies, handbooks, or unwritten policies or practices covering the same subject. Departmental policies in compliance with this policy are referenced in the section below, [Related Information](#). In the event of any disparity between this policy and the Town's Code of Ordinances and/or applicable local, state, or federal laws, the Town's Ordinance and/or applicable laws shall prevail.

Updated 10/31/2024

RELATED
INFORMATION

[Town of Chapel Hill Code of Ordinances Section 14-09](#)

[Serious Incident Policy Guidance](#)

[Grievance Policy PP 5-2](#)

[Disciplinary Policy PP 5-3](#)

[Equal Employment Opportunity Commission](#)

[Anti-Bullying Policy](#)

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE INCIDENT REPORTING FORM*

Report completed by: Name: Click or tap here to enter text.

Title:Click or tap here to enter text. Department: Click or tap here to enter text.

Name of person alleged to acting violent, making threats, or showing other potential violent behavior (citizen or employee) Click or tap here to enter text.

Date and place where incident occurred? Click or tap here to enter text.

What began the situation that included the act or threat? Click or tap here to enter text.

Who or what was threatened? Click or tap here to enter text.

What was said or done? Click or tap here to enter text.

Did physical action accompany the threat? If so, describe:Click or tap here to enter text.

What weapons were used, if any? Click or tap here to enter text.

Who else was present? Include name (if an employee) department, address, and phone number:

Has this or a similar incident happened before? When and where? Was it reported?

Include additional relevant information:

What action do you believe should be taken / or what action was taken?

Signature of employee reporting incident: _____ Date_____

Signature of supervisor/official notified: _____ Date_____

* This form may be used as a guide for documenting incidents. If the incident involves a non-employee, complete, sign, and place a copy in your files; a copy should also be provided to the staff of the Police Crisis Unit. If the incident involves an employee but is immediately resolved (i.e., a fight resulting in termination or an incident of harassment where the employee is counseled by the supervisor), place a copy in your files and send to HRD with other documentation for action taken.