

**CITY OF CORAL SPRINGS
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY MANUAL**

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| CHAPTER: 06 HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES | POLICY #: 06.01.05 |
| SECTION: 01 STANDARDS OF CONDUCT | |
| SUBJECT: 05 VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE | |
| | DEPARTMENT: HUMAN RESOURCES |
| | EFFECTIVE DATE: 06/01/96 |
| | CITY MANAGER: MICHAEL LEVINSON |
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POLICY

The City of Coral Springs promotes a safe and healthy work environment for its employees. However, situations may still arise involving potential or actual workplace violence. Awareness is one of the greatest defenses available to employees to reduce risks associated with violence in the workplace. Programs have been implemented to raise employee awareness, to provide a system for reporting threats or acts of violence, and to reduce the risks of workplace violence. The City has a compelling interest in maintaining employee and public safety as well as the continued performance of required duties. Threats or acts of violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Violators are subject to disciplinary actions up to and including termination and may subject to criminal sanctions.

DEFINITIONS

Workplace violence includes any act, occurring either on City premises or during the performance of work-related duties, that:

- Threatens the safety of an employee and/or customer.
- Affects the health, life, or well-being of an employee and/or customer.
- Results in damage to City, employee, or customer property.

Examples of workplace violence include acts of coercion, verbal intimidation, threats, harassment, stalkings, theft, assaults, fist fights, beatings, stabbings, vandalism, arson, and hostage taking.

A **threat** is the expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm regardless of whether the person communicating the threat has the present ability to carry out the threat and regardless of whether the threat is contingent, conditional, or future.

PROVISIONS

1. **WORKPLACE RESPONSE TEAM** The Workplace Response Team analyzes potential problems and investigates threats and acts of violence in the workplace. The Team has members from Human Resources, Police, Public Works, City Attorneys Office, Risk Management, and others deemed appropriate based upon circumstances. Human Resources is also the Team Facilitator, providing information on threats or acts of violence submitted by employees.
2. **PROHIBITIONS** Employees are prohibited from engaging in any act either on City premises or during performance of work related duties which may be defined as workplace violence. Employees are expected to adhere to policy provisions in support of safe work environments.
3. **CONFLICT BETWEEN EMPLOYEES** On the job situations may arise between employees or between employees and supervisors which result in strong negative feelings by the individuals involved. Anyone involved in situations where they fear that physical retaliation may take place or anyone receiving verbal threats of physical violence should immediately contact their supervisor and Human Resources.
4. **CONFLICT BETWEEN EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS** Similar situations may arise between employees and the public. While the City has a strong commitment to customer service, continuous verbal abuse by a customer will not be tolerated. A supervisor should be requested to intervene if a customer becomes verbally abusive. If there is a concern over the possibility of physical violence, it should be immediately reported to their supervisor and Human Resources.
5. **PERSONAL CONFLICT** Off the job situations involving personal disputes with relatives or others may result in an on the job confrontation. If a personal situation has escalated to the point that a restraining order or other type of court order is being pursued, the work location should also be included in the order. Supervisors and Human Resources should be informed of the court order and be provided with a description of the individual cited in the order.
6. **EMERGENCY SITUATIONS** Employees who fear for their personal safety should immediately contact the Police Department if it is an emergency by calling (9) 9-1-1 for internal telephones and 9-1-1 for outside telephones. Supervisors and Human Resources should be informed as soon as is practical.
7. **EVALUATION OF SITUATIONS** When potentially violent situations are brought to management's attention, an evaluation of the severity of the matter must be made immediately. Contact the Human Resources Manager or the Director of Human Resources who will convene the Workplace Response Team. The Workplace Response Team will:
 - a. investigate the situation, make a determination of the credibility of the threat and the likelihood of

violence, and recommend a course of action. Worksite security will also be evaluated to reduce the risk of violence in the workplace.

- b. if it is determined that the situation requires additional measures, the situation will be discussed with employees who are likely to come in contact with the subject, providing a description and instructions on actions to be taken if the subject comes to the worksite.
- c. provide the same information to the Police Department.

In all cases, call 9-1-1 if there is an immediate need for Police Department intervention.

8. **TRAINING** Employee training will be conducted periodically to raise employee awareness on the phenomena of workplace violence. Training includes education on the dangers of violence, teaching employees how to recognize the signs which are usually present, and establishing an understanding that the City accepts nothing less than a zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. Additional supervisory training will focus on a supervisor's responsibility to ensure an active commitment to providing a safe workplace, to report to Human Resources any threats or acts of violence, and to follow up on any reports of workplace violence submitted by employees.
9. **EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES** Employees have a responsibility to act upon any observation, event, or occurrence that may indicate a need for help. Any employee becoming aware of any of the early warning signs should immediately contact their supervisor and Human Resources. All threats or acts of violence are treated seriously under the "no tolerance" policy.
10. **EARLY WARNING SIGNS** Note: This list is not intended to identify all warning signs. Any behavior or actions which makes one feel uncomfortable for the safety of themselves or others should be immediately reported.

Early warning signs may include:

- carrying a concealed weapon or flashing a weapon to test reactions;
- direct or veiled threats of harm;
- intimidation of others (physical or verbal; harassing phone calls or stalking are obvious examples);
- disregard for the safety of co-workers;
- paranoid behavior (perceiving that the world is against them);
- unable to take criticism of job performance;
- holding a grudge against a co-worker or supervisor or verbalizing hope for something bad to happen to that person;

- obsessive involvement with the job, often with uneven job performance and no apparent outside interests;
- extreme interest in semi-automatic or automatic weapons and their destructive power to people;
- fascination with incidents of workplace violence and approval of the use of violence under similar

- circumstances;
- history of violent or abusive behavior; and
- expression of extreme desperation over recent family, financial, or personal problems.

Some circumstances that may trigger an attack include an unsatisfactory review, disciplinary action, unresolved conflicts, drawn out grievance period, unfavorable grievance resolutions, loss of pay or benefits, demotion, termination or layoff, increased productivity demands, and increased performance expectations. Primary motives include revenge for what is perceived as unfair treatment, and relationship troubles.

11. **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** Employees are encouraged to resolve conflict and to seek help through the Employee Assistance Program.
12. **WORKSITE SECURITY** Worksites will be periodically evaluated by a Security Focus Group. Reasonable security measures will be implemented based upon feasibility. Employees with a concern about worksite security should contact Human Resources.

KEYS Building access points will be restricted through key control processes. Employees are responsible for maintaining possession of keys signed out to them. It is prohibited to use, duplicate, or possess keys to City facilities without authorization.

WEAPONS Except for law enforcement officers, weapons are prohibited on City premises or in City vehicles. Possession of a weapon shall result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Note: Certain employees may be authorized by their department director to use work tools such as large pocket or folding knives or similar work tools in the performance of their duties. These authorized work tools are not considered weapons for purposes of this policy unless the work tool is used in a threatening manner, verbally or otherwise. In certain situations, employees may be requested to turn over such authorized work tools to their supervisor. Failure to comply will be construed as a violation of this policy.

13. **TRAUMA COUNSELING** In the event of an occurrence of workplace violence, trauma counseling will be made available to affected employees.
14. **INVESTIGATIONS AND RESPONSES** Instances of workplace violence (threats or acts) will be investigated. Responses to acts of violence may include media interaction, family notification, group debriefing, individual counseling, and workplace restoration. These activities will be coordinated by the Workplace Response Team.
15. **CONFIDENTIALITY** Information about an incident or threat will be disclosed on a need to know basis.

To the extent allowed by law, confidentiality will be maintained when threats or acts of violence are reported. Individuals retaliating against an employee that reported a threat or act of violence will be disciplined.

16. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS Disciplinary actions up to and including termination will result for employees violating this policy. The City will pursue criminal sanctions as appropriate.
17. EMPLOYEE SUGGESTIONS Employees are encouraged to take an active role in creating a safe work environment. Any suggestions for improving policy or security should be directed to Human Resources.

EFFECTIVE DATE:

MICHAEL LEVINSON, CITY MANAGER

DATE