

Warren County Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Summary

The safety and security of Warren County's employees, contractors, visitors and clients is very important. Threats, threatening behavior, acts of violence, or any related conduct that disrupts the work of an individual, or the County's ability to execute its mission, will not be tolerated.

Any person who makes threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts in the workplace, may be removed from the premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Complaints involving workplace violence will not be ignored and will be given the serious attention they deserve.

For the purpose of this policy, "workplace" means any location, either permanent or temporary, where an employee or contractor appointed by the County, visitor, temporary or contract employee, performs any work-related duty. This includes, but is not limited to, the buildings and surrounding perimeters including the parking lots, alternate work locations, and travel to and from work assignments.

For the purpose of this policy, "workplace violence" and "threat of violence" or "actual violence" includes any physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the workplace by employees or third parties. It includes, but is not limited to, beating, stabbing, shooting, rape, psychological trauma such as threats, obscene phone calls, an intimidating presence, and harassment of any nature such as stalking, shouting or swearing.

Prohibited Conduct

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Injuring another person physically.
- Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person.
- Engaging in behavior that subjects another individual to extreme emotional distress.
- Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon that is not required by the individual's position while in the workplace or engaged in County business.
- Intentionally damaging property.
- Threatening to injure an individual or to damage property.
- Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment.
- Retaliating against any employee who, in good faith, reports a violation of this policy.

Violent acts of employees occurring outside the workplace also may be grounds for disciplinary action in accordance with negotiated labor contracts, up to and including termination.

Weapons

Warren County has enacted Local Law No. 2 of 2007 which prohibits entry into and remaining in county buildings by persons in physical possession of a deadly weapon. This local law prohibits any loaded weapon from which a shot, readily capable of producing death or other serious physical injury, may be discharged, or a switchblade knife, gravity knife, piliium ballistic knife, metal knuckle knife, dagger, billy, blackjack, or metal knuckles from being brought into any building owned or leased by the County unless the individual is an authorized individual as described in Section 5 of the local law.

In addition, employees may not carry a weapon covered by this policy while performing any task on the County's behalf unless the employee has been given specific written consent by the County to carry a weapon while performing specific tasks on the County's behalf. Employees, other than trained security personnel, are not expected to handle potential situations or incidents of violence.

Prohibited weapons include any form of weapon or explosive restricted under local, state, or federal regulation. This includes all firearms, illegal knives, or other weapons covered by law. Legal, chemical dispensing devices such as pepper sprays that are sold commercially for personal protection are permitted. If you have a question about whether an item is covered by this policy, please contact the Self-Insurance Department.

Domestic Violence

Victims of domestic violence who believe that the violence may extend into the workplace or employees who believe that domestic or other personal matters may result in their being subject to violence extending into the workplace are encouraged to notify their supervisor. Confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible.

Reporting of Incidents

All threats of violence or actual violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported in writing as soon as possible to your immediate supervisor or any other member of management, and/or the police during a legitimate emergency by calling 911. The County Administrator shall also be notified.

Any employee, visitor, temporary or contract employee, or contractor engaged by the County who witnesses an incident of workplace violence or the potential for violence also has a duty to report the incident to management. When reporting a threat of violence, you should be as specific and detailed as possible.

Investigation of Complaints

Allegations of workplace violence are treated seriously by the County and all reports of threats of violence, actual violence and suspicious activities will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. The investigation will be conducted in such a way as to maintain confidentiality to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

In the event that they are asked, employees and management are expected to cooperate fully with any ongoing investigation. Where possible, investigations will be conducted by the County Administrator in cooperation with the Department Head and/or the Warren County Sheriff's Department, as appropriate.

Retaliation

Retaliation against anyone acting in good faith who has made a complaint of workplace violence, who has reported witnessing workplace violence, or who has been involved in reporting, investigating, or responding to workplace violence is a violation of this policy. Those found responsible for retaliatory action will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.

Disciplinary Action

If the County determines that unacceptable conduct has been committed by an employee, the County will take such action as is appropriate ranging from counseling up to and including termination of employment. In addition, any manager or supervisor who knows about a threat of violence, or actual violence, and takes no action to stop it, or who fails to report an incident of workplace violence may also be subject to corrective action up to and including termination of employment.

THE POLICY SHALL NOT BE CONSTRUED TO CREATE A DUTY OR OBLIGATION ON THE PART OF THE COUNTY TO TAKE ANY ACTIONS BEYOND THOSE REQUIRED OF AN EMPLOYER BY EXISTING LAW.

A complete copy of the policy is available by contacting the Office of the County Administrator.