

**City of Seaside
Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy
TABLE OF CONTENTS**

I. PURPOSE2

II. POLICY2

III. APPLICABILITY2

IV. MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES.....2

V. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES3

VI. INCIDENT INVESTIGATION5

VII. VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY5

VIII. REFERENCES5

APPENDIX A: ELEMENTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE6

APPENDIX B: INCIDENT ACTION PLAN.....7

APPENDIX C: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAINING8

APPENDIX D: POTENTIAL WORKPLACE SECURITY HAZARDS AND
CORRECTIVE MEASURES9

I. PURPOSE

The policy for Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy is created to increase awareness among all City employees for the potential of violence within the organization, and to recognize signs, remedies and consequences of a violent act.

The City of Seaside is committed to providing a safe work environment, free from violence and the threat of violence. The top priority in this process is the effective handling of critical workplace incidents, especially those dealing with actual, potential, or threatened violence.

II. POLICY

The City hereby establishes a workplace violence prevention policy in compliance with Cal/OSHA's "Guidelines for Workplace Security." Employees are advised that disciplinary action may result from violation of this Policy or any workplace safety procedure. Employees are further advised that the principles of progressive discipline may be waived in instances of egregious or serious acts by employees. Termination from employment is a possibility and may be the only disciplinary action that is taken.

III. APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all City employees. It is recognized that Police employees in particular, and Fire employees to a lesser degree, are subjected to violent, or potentially violent situations in the course and scope of their duties and their actions shall be governed by the respective Department Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) or General Orders (GO).

IV. MANAGEMENT AND SUPERVISORY RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the City's Injury and Illness Prevention program, the following responsibilities apply to this program:

- A. Personnel Services Manager is responsible to:
 - 1. Make all attempts to identify a potentially violent person during the initial job interview and screening process, to include:
 - a. Only accepting complete job application forms that include a waiver and release for the City to verify reported information.
 - b. Ensuring that appropriate supporting documents are received and thoroughly reviewed.

- c. Always requiring written and thorough reference checks from the hiring department before approving a candidate for hire.
 2. Ensure that Employee Assistance Program information is readily available to all employees. Provide assistance to managers and supervisors in understanding the program and supporting employee's use of the program.
 3. Remind all employees through memos and training of the importance and urgency of reporting all threats of workplace violence to a supervisor immediately after such an incidence occurs.
- B. In addition to the Employee Responsibilities below, all managers and supervisors are responsible to:
 1. Immediately investigate all reports of workplace violence
 2. Make all attempts to identify a potentially violent person during the selection interview.
 3. Conduct thorough and complete background checks on prospective employees.
 4. Offer periodic workplace safety meetings where workplace violence issues are discussed.
 5. Remind employees that an Employee Assistance Program is available to all employees. This program can help employees resolve issues before they become a workplace problem and provide assistance to managers and supervisors.
 6. Inspect the workplace as well as evaluate the work tasks of employees to determine the presence of hazards, conditions, operations and situations which might place workers at risk of occupational assault incidents and correct workplace security issues (see Appendix D).

V. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Behavior that detracts from, and impedes the ability of others to work in a violence free environment is inappropriate and will be addressed in accordance with the City's disciplinary rules and regulations, as well as this policy.

Employees are advised that violation of these behavior standards may result in discipline up to, and including immediate termination of employment. Threats or violent acts will result in appropriate action by law enforcement, to include arrest.

- A. Employees are expected to exhibit workplace behaviors that demonstrate respect for others and professionalism at all times during working hours or while conducting City business. Unacceptable behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following:
1. Uttering threats of violence
 - a. A threat occurs when a person expresses intent to inflict harm on another person through physical injury, punishment or intimidation. This includes:
 - i. Threats aimed directly at the victim(s) by the perpetrator.
 - ii. Veiled or indirect threats made to a third party against a victim(s).
 - iii. Conditional threats contingent on a particular event occurring.
 2. Engaging in verbal abuse
 3. Physical fighting
 4. Bringing items intended as weapons (guns, knives, bombs, drugs, poisons, etc.) to the workplace
 - a. Employees who carry pocket knives to assist in carrying out their duties shall not bring knives to work with a blade length exceeding 2 ½ inches.
 5. Creating disturbances in the workplace that cause co-workers to be concerned for their safety
 6. Bullying of employees
- B. Employees must report all acts of violence, whether physical or verbal, to a supervisor immediately following the incident.
1. Report potential acts or threats of violence by co-workers, outsiders, taxpayers, and visitors to a supervisor (e.g., noticeable changes in a co-worker's or customer's demeanor) that causes concern about the employee's safety.
- C. Employees should respond appropriately to a potentially violent situation to ensure their safety and the safety of others.
1. Get away from the perpetrator if possible. If you cannot distance yourself from the perpetrator, try to talk him or her into calming down.

2. Immediately call 911 for help when given the first opportunity.
 3. Remain calm and relaxed so that the perpetrator does not sense your fear.
 4. If you have doubt about your ability to resolve a conflict with a perpetrator, do not engage in the task.
- D. Attend workplace training and safety meetings.
 - E. Remain aware of the potential for violence in the workplace.
 - F. Notify the Personnel Office if you have a domestic violence restraining order.

VI. INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

- A. The City Manager and Personnel Services Manager will be notified immediately following report of an act of threat of violence.
- B. An investigation will immediately follow a report of an act or threat of violence. An investigation may include a search of personal and City property including areas such as desks, lockers, and vehicles. The employee need not be present for the search to begin.
- C. The investigation will be conducted by the employee's supervisor, although an outside investigator may be utilized. Depending on the circumstances, law enforcement personnel may be included in the investigation.

VII. VIOLATION OF THIS POLICY

- A. Reporting of a violent occurrence is mandatory and failure to do so could result in disciplinary actions up to, and including termination.
- B. An employee found in violation of this policy will be provided all due process rights and is subject to discipline up to and including termination. Principles of progressive discipline may be waived in instances of egregious or serious acts by employees.

VIII. REFERENCES

- Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1973
- California Labor Code Section 6300 et seq.
- California Department of Industrial Relations, "Guidelines for Workplace Security"
- California Code of Regulations Section 3202
- California Workplace Violence Safety Act of 1994

APPENDIX A: ELEMENTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

There is no exact method to predict when a person will become violent. One or more of these warning signs may be displayed before a person becomes violent, but they do not necessarily indicate an individual will become violent.

- A. A display of these signs should trigger concern as they are usually exhibited by people experiencing problems.
 - 1. Frequent interpersonal conflicts.
 - 2. The person displays obvious changes in work patterns such as tardiness, absenteeism, or poor work performance.
 - 3. The person demonstrates extreme or bizarre behavior.
 - 4. The person has a mental illness or substance abuse problem.
 - 5. Fascination with weaponry and/or acts of violence.
 - 6. Expression of extreme desperation over family, financial or personal problems.
 - 7. Expression of plan to hurt self/others.
- B. A potentially violent person can react to workplace situations.
 - 1. Layoffs: The loss of one's job is a traumatic event for an employee. Loss of funding, reduction of City services or State mandates can affect continuity of City employment.
 - 2. Inability to cope: With today's rapidly changing society, or because of their personal situation, some people are unable to cope with the stress of everyday activities, including their jobs.
- C. Prevention activities will include identifying and correcting workplace security hazards (see Appendix D).

APPENDIX B: INCIDENT ACTION PLAN

In the event of a workplace violence occurrence, the following steps (immediate and post trauma) should be taken by the ranking manager or supervisor:

A. IMMEDIATE RESPONSE

1. Assess the seriousness of the situation and call 911 if necessary.
2. Notify the City Manager and the Personnel Services Manager
3. Inspect the scene of the incident as soon as possible.
4. Secure the area and deny access to all non-emergency personnel until crime scene personnel arrive to gather evidence.
5. Police will question all victims and witnesses as soon as possible to gather the most accurate information.
6. Police will notify the families of the victim(s) and provide assistance.
7. Determine the direct and indirect causes of the incident. Include all previous reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator(s) and corrective actions taken at that time.
8. Calm hysterical witnesses and victims.

B. POST-TRAUMA RESPONSE

1. Provide a professional trauma counselor for employees immediately following a violent occurrence.
2. Arrange transportation for affected employees.
3. Communicate to all City employees and the public that everything is under control via a press release.
4. Repair inoperable phones (if needed).
5. Clean up and repair damaged City property (after the incident has been cleared to do so).
6. Provide follow-up training for identifying, preventing, and responding to workplace violence.
7. Designate staff, preferably from the Personnel Office, to handle details such as insurance coverage for medical expenses.

APPENDIX C: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION TRAINING

All employees, including managers and supervisors, should receive training on general and job-specific workplace security practices. Training should be provided when the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy is initially established and periodically thereafter. Training should also be provided to new employees, employees for whom training has not previously been provided, and to employees given new job assignments for which specific workplace security training has not previously been provided. Additional training will be provided to all City personnel as deemed necessary. Training should include the following topics:

- A. Explanation of the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy
- B. Recognition of security hazards, including risk factors associated with the three types of workplace violence conduct (see Attachment B)
- C. Violence prevention measures, such as reporting security hazards or threats, to managers or supervisors
- D. Ways to defuse hostile or threatening situations
- E. How to summon others for assistance
- F. Discussion of employee routes of escape
- G. Notification of law enforcement authorities when a criminal act has occurred
- H. Post event trauma counseling for those employees desiring assistance

APPENDIX D: POTENTIAL WORKPLACE SECURITY HAZARDS AND CORRECTIVE MEASURES

Type I: External Act: Events in which the perpetrator has no legitimate relationship to the workplace and enters the workplace to commit a criminal act, like a robbery or another violent act.

Assessment Measures

- Check the workplace exterior and interior for its attractiveness to robbers.
- Assess the need for security surveillance measures, such as mirrors or cameras, to increase employee awareness of workplace surroundings.
- Create procedures for employee response during a robbery or other criminal act.
- Post all emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire, and medical services where employees have access to a telephone.
- Limit the amount of cash on hand and use time access safes for large bills.

Corrective Measures

- Make the workplace unattractive (not worth the effort or too risky) to robbers.
- Use surveillance measures, such as cameras or mirrors, to increase outside and inside security in and around the workplace.
- Explain all procedures for reporting suspicious persons or activities.
- Update and post emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services where employees have ready access to a telephone.
- Post visible signs to notify the public that limited cash is kept on site, if appropriate.

Type II: Service Recipients: An event in which the perpetrator is the recipient of, or the object of, a service provided by the workplace (e.g., contractors, consultants, instructors, temp. workers, vendor).

Assessment Measures

- Easy access to and freedom of movement within and around the workplace.
- Effectiveness of workplace security systems, such as door locks, security windows, and restraint systems.
- Assess employees' skills in effectively handling threatening recipients.
- Effectiveness of City systems and procedures, such as alarms or panic buttons, to warn others of a security danger or to summon assistance.
- The use of work practices, such as "buddy" systems, for specified emergency events.
- The availability of employee escape routes.

Corrective Measures

- Create an open floor plan so that all entrances and exits are easily accessible.
- Ensure adequacy of workplace security systems (e.g., door locks, security windows, and physical barriers).
- Provide all employees with training to handle hostile situations.
- Install effective alarm systems to warn others of security dangers, or to summon assistance, (e.g., alarms or panic buttons).
- Establish a workplace system, such as the "buddy" system, for specified emergency events.
- Ensure adequate availability of escape routes for employees.

Type III: Current/Former Employees: An event in which the perpetrator has an employment interest, such as an employee, employee's spouse, or a person who has a dispute with a specific employee.

Assessment Measures

- How well the City's anti-violence policy has been communicated to employees, supervisors and management.
- The effectiveness of cross communication between and amongst management and employees.
- Our employee's, supervisors', and managers' knowledge of the warning signs of potential workplace violence.
- Access to and freedom of movement within, the workplace by non-City employees, including recently discharged employees or persons with whom an City employee may have a dispute.
- Reports of threats of violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace.
- Ensure that employees adhere to disciplinary and discharge procedures.

Corrective Measures

- Communicate the City's anti-violence policy to all employees, supervisors, and managers.
- Improve management and employee communication lines to freely relay pertinent information.
- Increase the awareness of employees, supervisors and managers of the warning signs of potential workplace.
- Control access to and freedom of movement within, the workplace by non-City employees, including recently discharged employees or persons with whom one of the employees may have a dispute.
- Ensure that reports of violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace are effectively handled by management.
- Ensure that employee disciplinary and discharge procedures address the potential for violence.

**RECEIPT OF THE CITY OF SEASIDE'S
Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy**

Please read the policy carefully to ensure that you understand the policy before signing this document.

I certify that I have received a copy of the City of Seaside's Prevention of Workplace Violence Policy. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comprehend this policy. I have read and understand the content, requirements, and expectations of the Policy and I agree to abide by the policy guidelines. I understand that if at any time I have questions regarding the Policy, I will consult with my immediate supervisor or the Personnel Office.

I agree to observe and follow this policy and I understand that failure to abide by the policy could result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

Employee Name (Signature)

Employee Name (Please Print)

Department

Date