

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy RM-2
Workplace Violence

SUBJECT: Workplace Violence

PURPOSE: To provide and encourage a safe environment and workplace for all University employees free from violence and conducive to a productive working environment.

POLICY: Sam Houston State University is concerned and committed to providing safety for University employees. We refuse to tolerate violence in the workplace and will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring.

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1. Responsibility

- a. Managers and supervisors are responsible for informing employees of this policy and for its enforcement.
- b. All employees, including supervisors and managers, must adhere to work practices designed to make the workplace more secure and must not engage in verbal threats or take physical actions which create a security hazard for others in the workplace.
- c. All employees, including supervisors and managers, are responsible for using safe work practices, for following directives, policies and procedures, and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

2. Definition

- a. Workplace violence is any physical or non-physical act that results in threatened or actual harm to a person or threatened or actual damage to property. It includes any threatening words or actions whether verbal or non-verbal which creates in the mind of any reasonable person the belief of receiving immediate or future harm to any person or property.
- b. Examples of what would normally be considered as workplace violence includes, but is not limited to the following occurring in the work setting:
 - any physical assault and/or battery
 - intimidating, threatening, or hostile statements, actions, or gestures
 - verbal threats or abuse
 - obscene phone calls
 - stalking
 - bomb threats
 - unlawful possession of a weapon
 - threatening comments regarding, or reference to, violent events and/or behavior
 - vandalism, arson, or sabotage
 - harassing phone calls
 - throwing objects and things regardless of whether or not a person is the target

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- intentional damaging or destruction or sabotage of University property or equipment or another's property or equipment or any substantial threat to destroy property or equipment
- any other act or behavior that is judged offensive or inappropriate and violent in the workplace or on campus

3. Enforcement of Policy Violations

- a. Employees who commit threatening or violent acts may be removed from the workplace, and may be subject to disciplinary action including termination, criminal prosecution, or both.
- b. Any disciplinary action initiated as a result of a workplace violence incident is not appealable.

4. Preventative Measures

- a. By taking preventative measures supervisors, managers, and employees can reduce the risk of workplace violence.
- b. Examples of preventative measures are as follows:
 - inform employees that there is a zero tolerance of workplace violence
 - encourage employees to report incidents
 - evaluate departmental employee selection process
 - communicate work safety with employees on a regular basis
 - establish a professional work environment
 - examine security as well as emergency procedures
 - be familiar with work location and any crime problems in or near the area
 - lock all doors, even for brief periods
 - know your neighbors; know who works at what time and who can be of help during emergencies
 - be especially careful when going to your car
 - be cautious of suspicious persons entering your work area
 - never get into an elevator if you are uncomfortable with a person in the elevator

5. Response Procedures

Workplace violence generally falls into three categories. The specific response depends upon the applicable category. The suggested actions by category are:

- a. Violence Has Occurred – Call 4-1000 for University Police or 911 for law enforcement and emergency services as needed. Contact the University Safety Office at the earliest practical time. Evaluate the threat for additional violence, warn other potential victims, inform victims of available medical services, cooperate with law enforcement, and coordinate employee and media communications through the University Public Relations Office.
- b. Immediate Threat Exists – Employees should not put themselves or anyone else at risk during a threat in relation to any imminent danger that can be identified. If the situation does not defuse and come under control by eliminating all threat of danger and violence, call 4-1000 or 911 for law enforcement assistance, assess danger to employees and public, warn potential targets, and take reasonable actions. At the earliest practical time report the incident to the University Safety Office, and the Employee Relations Section of the Human Resources Department.

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- c. Threat Made, But No Immediate Danger Apparent – Document the circumstances associated with the event to include a report of information from all involved employees and witnesses. Promptly develop and implement a plan of action. Coordinate any employee action with the Employee Relations Section of the Human Resources Department and report the incident to the University Safety Office. The plan should include appropriate corrective/disciplinary action up to and including termination based upon assessment of the individual's actions.

6. Safety Committee

The University Safety Committee is charged to detect unsafe conditions and practices and suggest remedies; observe unsafe acts and make corrections; discuss and analyze accident experiences to preclude reoccurrences; and disseminate information from their regular meetings.

Review by: David L. White, Interim Director of Human Resources – 02/01/2009
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