



ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES

SECTION: 500 – Health, Safety & Security	POLICY#: 503
TITLE: Workplace Violence Prevention	R & O #: 16-148
	IMPLEMENTED BY PROCEDURE #: 503-A
SPONSORING DEPT/DIV: Support Services/Human Resources	
ADOPTED: 10/25/2016	REVIEWED:

PURPOSE: The purpose of this policy is to define workplace violence, establish procedures to keep Staff and visitors safe and to respond to acts or threats of violence in the workplace.

APPLICABILITY: This policy and the implementing procedures apply to all employees, volunteers, interns and contractors of Washington County (referred to collectively herein as ‘Staff’).

DEFINITIONS:

“Weapons” means all firearms, ammunition, knives other than ordinary pocket knives, cutting utensils, clubs, brass knuckles, explosives or destructive devices, chemical weapons and devices, stun guns, or other objects that may be considered weapons as defined in ORS 166.360(5).

“Workplace violence” means 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 that immediate or future harm to any person or property is imminent. (Exception – duly appointed law enforcement personnel when required to use force to defend persons or property) Examples of workplace violence include but are not limited to the following:

1. Verbal or physical threats of violence, regardless if there is any intent to carry out the threat.
2. The possession of a weapon while in or on a public building, as defined in ORS 166.370 or any reasonable facsimile of any such weapon, on County property unless specifically authorized under ORS 166.370(3)(a-c) and (e-g) or by the County Administrator.
3. The display or use of any weapon, tool or other implements (Exception – duly appointed law enforcement personnel while acting within the scope of their employment).

4. Any visual or physical actions or gestures that could be reasonably perceived to be violent in nature.
5. Any physical assault and/or battery.
6. Obscene or harassing phone calls.
7. Stalking.
8. Threats or acts of domestic violence (including threats across social media platforms or by text) that could affect the workplace.
9. Bomb threats.
10. Threatening comments (including those made across social media platforms or by text) regarding, or referring to violent events or behavior.
11. Vandalism, arson, or sabotage.
12. Throwing objects regardless of whether or not a person is the target.
13. Intentional damage, destruction, or sabotage of County property or equipment, another's property or equipment, or any threat to destroy County property or equipment or another's property or equipment.
14. Any other act or behavior in the workplace that could be reasonably perceived as violent.

GENERAL POLICY:

Washington County does not permit, tolerate or condone any acts of violence in the workplace against its Staff or visitors. Staff members are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment that is free from the presence of violence by reporting threats or acts of violence in the workplace, refraining from exhibiting behavior or actions that could be interpreted as threatening or violent, and by being fully cooperative in the investigation of threats or acts of violence.

POLICY GUIDELINES:

1. Responsibilities:

The Human Resources Division shall be responsible for developing procedures to implement this policy and for monitoring compliance.

Department Directors and supervisors are responsible for informing Staff about this policy and for its enforcement.

Staff must report behaviors that could be perceived as violent. (Exception – duly appointed law enforcement personnel while acting within the scope of their employment)

Staff shall take preventative measures to reduce the risk of workplace violence. Examples of preventative measures can be found in the Administrative Procedures corresponding to this policy (503-A).

2. Weapons:

- 2.1. Staff members are prohibited from possessing weapons on County premises or properties, or while conducting County business. This includes housing/carrying a weapon in a private vehicle parked on County owned or leased property (see Prohibition of Carrying Firearms Policy). Exceptions:
 - A sworn law enforcement officer while acting within the scope of his or her employment;
 - A person summoned by a sworn law enforcement officer to assist in making an arrest or preserving the peace while the summoned person is engaged in assisting the officer;
 - An active or reserve member of the military forces when engaged in the performance of duty; or
 - A person who is authorized by the County to possess a weapon for the purpose of controlling a public building.
- 2.2. Unless otherwise specifically authorized herein, Staff who are licensed to carry concealed weapons are prohibited from doing so on County premises or property, or while conducting County business.

3. Duty to Warn:

Staff have a “duty to warn” their Supervisor, Department Director, or Human Resources Manager, of any suspicious workplace activity, situations or incidents that they observe or of which they are aware that involve other Staff, former Staff, customers or visitors. This includes but is not limited to, threats or acts of violence, aggressive behavior, offensive acts, threatening or offensive comments or remarks, possession of weapons on County property, threats of domestic violence that could affect the workplace, restraining orders, threats of workplace violence made by members of the general public against Staff or County property, or other examples provided in this policy.

4. Retaliation:

Retaliation or any adverse action taken against Staff that report acts of violence, as defined by this policy, will not be tolerated. Staff must report any acts of retaliation directly to their supervisor, manager, or Human Resources as soon as possible after the incident occurs.

5. Searches:

- 5.1. The County reserves the right to enter and search County property with or without notice based on investigatory or operational needs. County property includes but is not limited to desks, file cabinets, computer files, e-mail, phones, lockers, work areas, toolboxes and County vehicles.
- 5.2. The County will work with law enforcement to respond to a credible threat that has been reported or acts of violence that have been committed.

5.3. The County reserves the right to search personal property in cooperation with law enforcement including but not limited to packages, briefcases, purses and similar containers as well as private vehicles parked on County property.

6. Training.

The County will make available and encourage Staff to attend a workplace violence prevention training program.

7. Exceptions:

Exceptions may only be granted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners unless such authority has been delegated to the County Administrator.

8. Implementation:

Department Directors are expected to be knowledgeable of, and shall be responsible for, implementing this policy within their respective departments.

Staff members who commit threatening or violent acts may be removed from the workplace, and may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, and criminal prosecution.

9. Periodic Review:

This policy shall be reviewed by Support Services, Human Resources Division at least every three years, or more often if needed, and updated as necessary.