

CITY OF NORTON SHORES

POLICY ON VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

Statement of Purpose

The City of Norton Shores recognizes the need to provide for the safety and security of all City employees and visitors. In doing so, the City is complying with the Federal Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHA). Therefore, the City will not tolerate threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on City property. This includes physical attacks, verbal or physical threats, destruction of property, sexual harassment, intimidation, or abusive language.

Definitions

Workplace Violence includes but is not limited to harassment, threats, physical attack or property damage.

Threat is the expression of an intent to cause physical or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the present ability to carry it out and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional or future.

Physical Attack is unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing, shoving, biting, spitting, and throwing objects.

Property Damage is intentional damage to property which includes property owned by the City, employees, visitors or vendors.

Prevention

The City of Norton Shores in order to maintain a safe work environment supports the **prevention** of workplace violence. Prevention efforts include, but are not limited to, informing employees of this policy, instructing employees regarding the dangers of workplace violence, communicating the sanctions imposed for violating this policy and providing a reporting procedure within which to report incidents of violence without fear of reprisal.

Prohibited Actions and Sanctions

It is a violation of this policy to engage in any act of workplace violence, except for law enforcement personnel as authorized by law and within the confines of Police Department policies.

No employee or third party, excluding law enforcement personnel, is permitted to bring weapons or firearms into the workplace, or onto City property (except to register a firearm at the Police Department), or within City vehicles.

Any person who, in the opinion of the immediate supervisor, poses a threat to themselves or others within the workplace shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and shall remain off City premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Such removal of any employee will be immediately reviewed by the City's Crisis Management Team identified in this policy.

The City will initiate an appropriate response. This response may include, but is not limited to, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, and/or criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved.

Employee Responsibility

After adoption, employees will be given a copy of this policy along with an explanation of how it is to be implemented, such as how to report incidents of violence, what to do if the employee is threatened and/or if an incident of violence actually takes place. This explanation will also include discussions regarding how to prevent, identify and handle violence at an early stage in themselves or others, including co-workers, and how to deal with the after-effects of violence. This policy will be reviewed with new employees during orientation.

In the workplace, an employee witnessing violence directed against another or him/herself shall call a supervisor or 911, depending on the situation. The employee should also observe the situation and attempt to get information such as the name and description of the perpetrator, but only if it can be done without endangering the employee or others.

Any City employee having knowledge of workplace violence involving any other City employee (as victim or perpetrator) must report such an act to a supervisor immediately. Disciplinary action may result if the employee having knowledge of a suspected violent act fails to report the episode.

All employees who apply for or obtain a protective or restraining order which lists City property or City facilities as being protected areas must provide this information to the Director of his/her Department. The Director must report this information to the Police Chief.

The City and its employees shall cooperate fully with police and other law enforcement officials in the investigation and prosecution of violent acts.

The City understands the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information requested, and recognizes and will respect the privacy of the reporting employee(s).

All employees should openly communicate with each other to be aware of any unusual activity that may identify the potential for or actual occurrence of workplace violence.

Recommendations for improved safety often come from suggestions from employees. These suggestions are encouraged and may be channeled through supervisors or the Personnel Office.

Implementation

Managing a Potentially Violent Situation:

City employees are expected to assist the general public and fellow employees in a courteous manner, but not subject themselves to abusive conduct if confronted by:

1. A distraught, harassing or abusively angry person.
 - a. If a person becomes angry or abusive, the employee should courteously attempt to calm the person down. If that does not work, the employee shall ask a supervisor to intervene.
2. A person threatening bodily harm.

If a employee feels that he/she or another person is threatened, and in danger of imminent bodily harm:

- a. The employee should attempt to leave the scene, if it can be done safely.
- b. If the supervisor is not aware of the situation the employee must notify the supervisor as soon as it can be done safely.
- c. If the situation warrants, the Police Department must be notified

Reporting Incidents - Internal and External

Each incident of violent behavior, whether the incident is committed by another employee or an external individual such as a vendor or a citizen, must be reported to a Department Director. The Department Director will assess and investigate the incident and determine the appropriate action to be taken. The Personnel Director must be informed of all reported incidents of workplace violence. (A Report Form is attached).

In critical incidents, in which serious threat or injury occurs, emergency responders such as Police and Fire must be notified immediately. As necessitated by the seriousness of the incident, the Personnel Director may assemble a Crisis Management Team to establish the protocol to be followed in the aftermath of a violent incident.

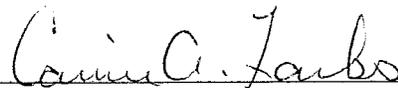
Crisis Management Team

The Crisis Management Team may consist of the City Administrator, Personnel Director, Police Chief, City Attorney, and others as deemed necessary. The Crisis Management Team is responsible for the following:

- evaluating potential violence problems
- assessing an employee's fitness for duty (through medical and/or mental health professionals)
- selecting intervention techniques
- coordinating with victims, families, other employees, media, and law enforcement personnel
- referring victims for appropriate assistance, including counseling

Conclusion

This policy is established for the benefit of all employees and visitors to ensure a safe workplace. Any questions regarding this policy or violence in the workplace should be directed to the Personnel Director.



Carrie A. Larks
Director of Administrative Services/
Assistant to the City Administrator

Effective Date