



Policy Type: Board

Category: Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management

Policy Name: Workplace Violence Prevention Policy - Board Policy 3.18

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3.18 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY (Adopted 9-26-95)

3.18.1 Introduction

Santa Clara County is committed to serving a wide range of citizens, some of whom can be under severe stress and have nowhere else to turn. Providing services to these and other persons can place County employees in a position of vulnerability to violence or threatening behavior. The County values its employees and clients and, with this Policy, the Board of Supervisors affirms its commitment to providing workplaces and facilities that are free from violence. This will be accomplished through:

3.18.2 Types of Perpetrators

(A) Strangers

To help protect employees from violent strangers in the community, the County will provide crime prevention information to employees and will address security issues involving worksites and facilities.

(B) Clients

Since employees in many departments deal with clients who are distressed and who may make threats or commit acts of violence, the County will provide support and guidance so that threats of violence



can be recognized and prudently addressed, and so that acts of violence can be prevented if possible.

(C) Family Members or Acquaintances

If the workplace is affected by a violent act or threat of violence by an employee's family member or acquaintance, the County will provide support and guidance for the victim and his or her co-workers.

(D) Employees

The County of Santa Clara will not tolerate violent acts or threats of violence (either verbal or implied) by employees. In such cases, the County endorses immediate and definitive use of the disciplinary process up to and including discharge from County employment, consistent with ensuring the safety of co-workers. Criminal prosecution will be pursued as appropriate. The County also advocates a preventive approach whereby merit system rules and regulations are fairly and consistently administered, and where troubled employees receive guidance and, if necessary, professional help.

3.18.3 Roles and Responsibilities

(A) County Executive

The County Executive shall ensure that this Policy is fully implemented and adapted to unique needs at the agency/department level, and that the County organization maintains an effective support structure for responding to acts and threats of workplace violence.



The Executive's Office of Occupational Safety and Environmental Compliance will include this Policy as part of the County's written Occupational Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

(B) Employee Services Agency

The Employee Services Agency has overall responsibility for maintaining this Policy and for identifying resources that agencies and departments can use in developing their training plans and violence prevention measures. The Employee Services Agency will also administer workplace violence prevention measures involving Labor Relations (including compulsory medical or "fitness for duty" examinations) and the Employee Assistance Program, and will coordinate post-incident activities involving employee services and claims management.

(C) Agency and Department Heads

Agency and Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that this Policy is implemented in their respective organizations and that the unique needs of their organizations are addressed through procedures and training. Each agency and/or department must develop a plan for preventing and responding to acts of workplace violence. These plans need not be lengthy, but they shall contain as a minimum a Facility Emergency Plan attachment that includes facility-specific procedures (such as alarm buttons and escape routes), notification lists, and a time-line for training designated employees.

(D) Managers and Supervisors

It is the responsibility of managers and supervisors to make safety their highest concern. When made aware of real or perceived threat of violence, management shall conduct a thorough investigation,



provide support for employees, and take specific actions to help prevent acts of violence. Managers and supervisors shall also provide information and training for employees as needed.

(E) Employees

Employees should learn to recognize and respond to behaviors by potential perpetrators that may indicate a risk of violence. Employees shall also place safety as the highest concern, and shall report all acts of violence and threats of violence.

3.18.4 Physical Security

Since the County is a public organization that wishes to remain accessible to its clients to the fullest extent possible, it is not the County's intent to implement a widespread "fortification" of its facilities. The County prefers to train its employees to be the primary means of reducing workplace violence. However, certain facilities, due to the nature of the service provided, may need barriers, cameras, metal detectors, better locks, and the like. Where such structures are necessary, they should be constructed in the least obtrusive way feasible.

3.18.5 Training and Information

Although acts of workplace violence cannot be precisely predicted, a knowledge of how to respond to perpetrators can help County employees minimize the risk of violence or injury. The County will provide designated employees with training that will help them take appropriate precautions and respond wisely when confronted with a potentially violent individual. Departments will structure this training to meet the unique needs of each operation.



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Since the vast majority of violent acts perpetrated by employees and employee family members are preceded by a number of behaviors that signal an escalating situation, the County will provide employees with written materials that will help them recognize the warning signs of violence, and will recommend professional consultation or initiation intervention measures before a violent act occurs.

Related Policies

None.

Related Forms and Information

None.

History

| Date | Changes Made |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| 1/23/2014 | Policy Uploaded. (John Myers) |
| 9/26/1995 | Policy Adopted. |