

SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

***IF THERE IS IMMINENT DANGER, CALL 911 (OR 9+911)
AND ASK FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT TO RESPOND.***

I. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

San Luis Obispo County is committed to providing a workplace that is safe, secure and free of violence, threats and intimidation for all employees. It is every employee's duty to maintain a safe and productive workplace. A businesslike workplace helps to ensure courteous treatment for both employees and the public we serve. This commitment is reflected in this Workplace Violence Policy, the County's core values statement, and the Board of Supervisors' ongoing support for violence awareness/prevention programs and safety programs. All covered individuals are required to report, as soon as possible, any conduct that violates this policy. This policy and associated procedures may be modified by the Human Resources Director as needed to comply with changes in state or federal law, or for administrative reasons.

II. SCOPE

This policy applies to all County employees, contractors and volunteers. This policy applies to all locations where County employees work or represent the County including any County facility, County vehicles, customer and vendor premises and County sponsored events and activities. This policy may apply to off-duty employee conduct depending on the nexus to the job and the impact on the County.

III. WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

San Luis Obispo County (County) maintains a zero-tolerance policy prohibiting violent acts or threats of violence, by County employees, clients or members of the public. It is the policy of the County that all employees shall have a working environment free of violence, threats of violence, or retaliation for making a report pursuant to this policy.

Definition of Workplace Violence:

Workplace violence is defined as all threats or acts of violence occurring at a County workplace or location that an employee may be conducting County business regardless of the relationship between the County and the individual involved in the incident. This list of behaviors, while not all inclusive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited:

- Hitting, shoving or making contact with an individual in a threatening or hostile manner, with any part of one's body and/or an object;
- Threatening to harm an individual or his/her family, friends, associates, or property;
- Making harassing or threatening telephone calls, or sending harassing or threatening written or electronic communications;
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress;
- Intimidating or attempting to coerce an employee to do wrongful acts, or violate law, administrative rule, or policy;
- Willful and repeated following of another person, also known as "stalking", or harassing surveillance of another person;
- Simulating acts of violence, simulating use of a weapon, or presenting an intimidating posture towards another person;
- Stating or suggesting that harm to a person or property is appropriate or desired;
- Intentionally damaging County property or property of another employee;
- Possession of a weapon while on County property or while on County business (unless specifically required by the job and approved by the County/Department Head).

Employee Conduct:

The County will not tolerate acts of violence or threats of violence by employees. Any violation of this policy is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination. San Luis Obispo County requires that all employees and officers of the County treat the public and other employees with courtesy and respect. Off duty violence or threats of violence may also be subject to discipline depending on the nexus to the employee's job as well as the discredit such conduct may bring to the County. Violation of this policy by an employee will result in discipline up to and including termination.

Non-Employee Conduct:

The County will not tolerate acts of violence or threats of violence by members of the public against County employees or at a County workplace regardless of the relationship between the County and the individual involved in the incident. Such acts or threats may result in any or all of the following actions: 1) being denied access to County facilities; 2) controls on how the member of the public interfaces with County staff; and 3) referral to local law enforcement agencies.

Enforcement and Action:

All Department Heads are responsible for ensuring that this Workplace Violence Policy is enforced. All managers, supervisors, leadworkers and discrimination and harassment coordinators, (hereinafter, managers), are required to take appropriate action when made aware of any violation of this policy. Because incidents may vary in risk and severity, judgment must be used when determining an appropriate course of action. Actions the manager may take include invoking front desk safety protocols, removing individuals from the workplace, calling 911, or in extreme incidents, evacuation or lockdown of the workplace.

Reporting:

Any employee who believes he/she has been subjected to or is aware of a violent act or threat of violence in the workplace is required to report the conduct to any manager or County Human Resources. An employee who becomes personally aware of an individual who poses a risk of violence or threat of violence in the workplace must inform a manager. For example, a person who is aware of a domestic dispute that could threaten the workplace must notify manager. Any employee who has been granted a restraining order against another individual must notify his/her Department Head of the restraining order. Department management shall notify County Human Resources of any violations or potential violations of this policy and shall consult with County Counsel and law enforcement as appropriate.

Investigation:

It is the policy of the County to investigate allegations of violent acts or threats of violence in the workplace, including those in which anonymity is requested. Managers who receive complaints of violent acts or threats of violence must document the complaint and notify the Human Resources Department promptly.

Retaliation:

The County will not retaliate against any person who reports or supports others who report violent acts or threats of violence in the workplace. In addition, it is a violation of this policy for any employee to retaliate against any person who reports or supports others who report violent acts or threats of violence in the workplace.