

Town of Old Saybrook
Workplace Threats and Violence
Policy & Procedure
Adopted by Board of Selectmen: April 8, 2014

I. Policy

The safety and security of employees and visitors is of vital importance to the Town of Old Saybrook. We will strive to ensure that the workplace is as safe as possible and free from violence of any kind. The Town maintains a zero tolerance standard with respect to violence or threats of violence. Violent or violently threatening behavior of any kind, including implied or direct threats of violence, is prohibited at all the Town workplaces and facilities, and at any Town-sponsored event. Such conduct is prohibited by employees against any other employees or visitors even when the employee is not working.

Violations of this policy will lead to corrective action, up to and including termination of employment. In addition, violent threats or action will be reported to law enforcement authorities. No existing Town policy, practice or procedure should be interpreted to prohibit decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring, or a life threatening situation from developing.

While we will make every attempt to ensure a violence-free workplace, nothing in the policy shall be interpreted as a guarantee by the Town to protect any person, including any employee, from willful or reckless acts by others.

II. Definitions and Prohibitions

Workplace violence is defined as behavior in which an employee, former employee, client, business associate or visitor to a Town workplace inflicts or threatens to inflict damage to property, or cause serious harm, injury or death to others in the workplace, on Town property, at Town-sponsored events, or offsite directed at a Town employee as a result of the employee's working at the Town.

The Town prohibits employees or visitors, with the exception of duly authorized law enforcement personnel, from bringing onto the Town property or to any location where an employee is performing duties on behalf of the Town, including parking lots or other exterior premises and the Town vehicles, any weapons or dangerous instruments as defined below or dangerous animals and/or pets of any kind. The Town prohibits employees, clients and visitors from attempting to use, or threatening to use, any weapon or dangerous instrument at any the Town work site, on any Town property, or in any Town-owned vehicle.

- Weapon means any firearm, including a BB gun, pellet gun, whether loaded or unloaded, any knife (excluding a small pen or pocket knife), including a switchblade or other knife having an automatic spring release device, a stiletto, any police baton or nightstick or any martial arts weapon or electronic defense weapon.
- Dangerous instrument means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or physical injury, including, but not limited to, explosives, fireworks,

other incendiary devices, poisonous substances, and chemicals. It does not include instruments that normally would not be dangerous if used for the purpose for which they were intended, such as pens and pencils.

Violent or threatening behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following prohibited behaviors directed at an employee, client, or visitor:

- Striking, hitting, punching, slapping or threatening a person with such action;
- Fighting or challenging another person to a fight;
- Any aggressive touching, pinching, grabbing of another person;
- Engaging in dangerous or threatening horseplay;
- Threatening or causing harm or damage to another person or another person's property;
- Committing a violent felony or misdemeanor at work or on Town property;
- Any act that a reasonable person would perceive as constituting a threat of violence.

Employees and visitors are prohibited from causing, or threatening to cause, physical injury to any individual at any Town work site, or intentionally causing, or threatening to cause, property damage. Any person attempting to use, or threatening to use, any weapon or dangerous instrument at any Town work site or who engages in violent or threatening behavior on Town property shall be removed from the premises and shall remain off the premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Subsequent to the investigation, the Town will initiate an appropriate response. This response may include, but is not limited to, suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment, and/or criminal prosecution of the person(s) involved.

III. Reporting Acts or Threats of Violence

Any employee, who has been a victim of violence, believes they have been threatened with violence or has witnessed an act or threat of workplace violence towards anyone else should take the following steps:

- If an emergency exists and the situation involves the potential for imminent danger, the employee should immediately call 9-1-1, and take appropriate steps as directed by law enforcement officials and take whatever steps are appropriate or necessary to protect him or herself from harm.
- The employee should report the act or threat of violence to his or her supervisor or other Town management personnel as soon as possible. Even without an actual threat, employees should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent. Employees also should report any situation that gives them reason to believe that future workplace violence may occur. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the threat or threatening behavior and the person or persons who were threatened or were the focus of the threatening behavior.

Supervisors should report the incident to their Department Head, or to the First Selectman. The Town prohibits retaliation of any kind against anyone who has reported workplace violence.

IV. Domestic Violence and Restraining Orders

Domestic Violence can significantly impact workplace safety and the productivity of victims at work. Domestic violence includes abuse committed against a spouse or former spouse, domestic partner or former domestic partner, a cohabitant or former cohabitant, other household members, or any person with whom the victim has or had a romantic relationship. Abuse includes any intentional or reckless attempt to cause bodily harm, sexual assault, threatening behavior, harassment, stalking, making harassing phone calls, and similar conduct.

Employees who have obtained a protective or restraining order against any individual based on a potential act or threat of violence, domestic violence, stalking or harassment, that restricts the behavior of the individual and that would make the individual in violation of the order by coming near them at work, must provide a copy of the order to their supervisor. Supervisors should report the matter to their Department head.

V. Incident Investigation

Any report of workplace violence or threat of violence will be promptly investigated. The employee who is alleged to have engaged in violence or threatened violence may be placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation. Additional steps may also be taken to ensure, to the greatest extent feasible, the welfare and safety of employees. Upon conclusion of the investigation, the Town will determine what corrective action will be taken and what mitigating measures to take to prevent future recurrence of any violence or threat. The results of the investigation, including findings and actions taken, and the location where the incident occurred, will be documented

VI. Safety Committee

The Town has established a Safety Committee that includes representatives from various employee roles. The Committee consists of at least 50 percent non-management employees. The Committee meets at least once per calendar quarter, and will make available minutes and other records from its meetings to all employees. We welcome suggestions of ways we can improve the safety of our worksite, and reduce risks or hazards to anyone on our property. Please direct such suggestions to Police Chief Michael Spera, Chair of the Safety Committee.

VII. External Reporting

The Town will ensure that any incident of workplace violence is reported to local law enforcement within 24 hours from the occurrence whenever the violence constitutes an assault or related offense under Connecticut criminal statutes.

See Also: Harassment Prevention Policy