

Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

Polk County is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. Given the increasing violence in society in general, Polk County has adopted the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.

STATEMENT OF POLICY

It is the intent of Polk County to provide a safe workplace for all employees. Behavior that is physically or verbally threatening, either overtly or implicitly, as well as behavior that is coercive, intimidating, violent or harassing will not be condoned. Polk County is committed to working with its employees to maintain a work environment that is free of violence and intimidation.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all Polk County full time, part time, temporary employees, volunteers, contractors, or the public on County premises.

DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

Intimidation: Stalking or engaging in actions intended to coerce or induce duress. Such actions can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions, the use of profanity or other personally insulting remarks, whether made by telephone, voice mail, face-to-face, in writing, or via e-mail.

Physical Attack: Unwanted or hostile physical contact such as hitting, fighting, pushing shoving, or throwing objects.

Property Damage: Intentional or unintentional damage to property, which includes property owned by the County or employees.

Threat: Any behavior, physical or verbal, either overt or implicit, which communicates an intent to cause physical, emotional or mental harm. An expression constitutes a threat without regard to whether the party communicating the threat has the ability to carry it out and without regard to whether the expression is contingent, conditional, or future.

Weapons: As defined in Section 702.7 of the Code of Iowa, any dangerous instrument or device which is designed to inflict or capable of being used to inflict death or injury to a human being or animal. This includes, but is not limited to, any pistol, revolver, gun or other firearm, dagger, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, or knife having a blade exceeding five (5) inches in length.

Workplace Violence: Intimidation, threats, or acts which adversely affect employee morale or employee/departmental performance or which results in physical, emotional and/or property damage.

WEAPONS

Polk County prohibits all employees from carrying handguns, firearms, explosives, or weapons of any kind onto County property. County property includes, without limitation, all County parking lots, building (leased and owned); grounds and vehicles used for County business. Employees who are off County property but performing a task for the County are covered by this policy.

This section shall not apply to County employees who are authorized to use weapons in the performance of their job responsibilities (such as sheriff), or for those who are authorized to use hazardous tools or devices as bona fide portions of their jobs.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

Polk County will not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against employees. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities toward any employee

of Polk County or any member of the general public while on duty for Polk County.

Although not all-inclusive, the following are examples of behaviors included in this policy:

- Causing physical injury to another person.
- Making threatening remarks in person, in writing, by telephone, or other means of communication.
- Aggressive or hostile behaviors that create a reasonable fear of injury to another person or subjects another individual to emotional distress.
- Intentionally damaging County property or property of another employee.
- Unauthorized possession of a weapon while on County property or while on County business.
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to any form of prohibited harassment or domestic violence.

PROCEDURE

If any employee observes, or has information regarding violent, threatening, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior, such as those listed above, by anyone on County premises, they are to report it immediately to a supervisor or manager. If you are uncertain about an observed behavior or situation, or have questions or concerns regarding workplace violence, advise your supervisor, or contact the Human Resources Department immediately. This does not eliminate the initial responsibility of every employee to work to resolve conflicts promptly and, if possible, without the need for external, or management intervention.

Employees can also help to prevent violence in the workplace by reporting any suspicious behavior that they observe that could contribute to violence in the workplace.

ENFORCEMENT

Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts or any employee who fails to report such acts committed by others shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Non-employees engaged in violent acts toward County employees will be reported to the proper authorities and may be banned from County property and fully prosecuted.

Contact: Human Resources

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