
808.29 SUBJECT: PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

:1 OBJECTIVE

To provide policy guidance on how to prevent workplace violence and how to manage such situations if they occur.

:2 AUTHORITY:

This procedure amended by City Council May 10, 2010, Item A-2.

:3 DIRECTION:

Human Resources Division Manager or designee, as an appointed official, serves at the pleasure of, and receives direction from, the Mayor through the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or designee.

:4 METHOD OF OPERATION:

A. Definitions: For the purpose of this procedure, the following words and terms are defined as:

1. **Non-Verbal Violence:** Includes making bodily gestures that are threatening or abusive to persons or property.
2. **Physical Violence:** Typically involves the use or attempted use of force against persons or property.
3. **Verbal Violence:** Involves verbal threats to damage or injure persons or property, or abusive verbal outbursts.
4. **Violence:** Any behavior that abuses or injures a person in the workplace and/or damages or destroys property in the workplace. Violence can be physical, written, verbal or non-verbal in nature.
5. **Written Violence:** Includes making written threats of harm against persons or property.

B. Policy: **Workplace Violence:** The City of Orlando has zero tolerance for violence in the workplace. If an employee displays any acts of violence in the workplace, the employee will be subjected to disciplinary action from written reprimand to termination, depending on the nature of the violence and as stipulated in Policy and Procedure 808.20 - Disciplinary Action.

Violence, by or against any employee or person, is unacceptable and contrary to City policy and will subject the perpetrator to serious disciplinary action and possible criminal charges. The City will work with law enforcement to aid in the prosecution of anyone outside of the organization who commits violent acts against City employees on City property.

1. **Weapons:** Possession, use, or threat of use of a weapon, including any firearms, is not permitted at work or on City property, including employee parking areas or in a City vehicle, unless such possession or use of a weapon is: a) a necessary and approved requirement of the job; b) pursuant to F.S. 790.251, when a lawfully issued Florida Concealed Weapon's license and is both lawfully possessed and the weapon is at all times locked in or to a private

motor vehicle in a City provided parking lot; or c) otherwise specifically approved by the CAO.

2. **Reporting:** No employee, acting in good faith, who reports an incident under this policy, will be subject to retaliation or harassment based upon that report.

C. Procedure: **Critical Incident Report:** When a manager, supervisor, or employee observes an act of violence at work, the steps to take are as follows:

1. **In Immediate Emergency:**

Step 1: Call 911. As with any other emergency involving fire, violence, or medical incidents, the first step action is to call 911 and report as many details as possible so that the appropriate emergency response unit can be dispatched.

Step 2: Immediate contact:

- a) At City Hall – the Security Desk (407-246-2311).
- b) Field Office – your Department Director and the Human Resources Division Manager or designee.

The Human Resources Division Manager or designee may be contacted at any time and will ensure coordination of support and response with resources such as the City Attorney’s Office, Human Resources Division, the Employee Assistance Program, Risk/Safety Division, family, and others as needed.

2. **Non-Emergency**

The guidelines below apply to all City employees and are intended to aid managers in dealing with violent or potentially violent situations at work if there does not appear to be any immediate threat of violence or once an immediate emergency situation has been controlled. Altercations between persons at work are rare and usually minor, allowing time for supervisory intervention.

In circumstances deemed by the manager to be an emergency, call 911 and make the other contacts described above. It is understood that the actions of a manager or other employees will be dependent on the seriousness of the situation and the nature of an altercation, However, consistent with personal safety, managers and supervisors have a responsibility to make an effort to defuse violent or potentially violent situations as quickly as possible in order to prevent escalation and creation of a threat to others.

In general:

Step 1: Separate employees involved if you can do so safely. Do not attempt any interaction without adequate assistance. Do not allow a verbal, visual, or written altercation to escalate into something more serious. If the employees cannot be separated, call 911 and follow the steps in C.1. above.

Step 2: Contact your Department Director and the Human Resources Division Manager or designee.

- a) At City Hall – the Security Desk (407-246-2311).

b) Field Office – your Department Director and the Human Resources Division Manager or designee.

Step 3: Once the situation is controlled, separately interview all persons involved, including any witnesses, in order to obtain an accurate account of the incident. Document the statements of witnesses and others interviewed in written form. Those involved in an altercation and those who are possible subjects for further disciplinary action based on the incident, have the right to be represented, and to have a representative during the interview if one is requested or guaranteed by contract. By contacting Human Resources Division, advice and assistance in this process will be provided.

When appropriate, a referral to the City’s Employee Assistance Program will be made.

3. ***Immediate Suspension With Pay:*** If the situation is serious enough that possible termination may be involved and/or the continued presence of an employee at the worksite would not be appropriate given the altercation or particular circumstances, an employee may be immediately suspended with pay and ordered not to return to the worksite until further advised. This action is unusual but may be taken with the Department Director’s concurrence, following consultation with the Human Resources Division Manager or designee.

Most workplace altercations that do not warrant termination, justify appropriate disciplinary action through the use of the City’s progressive discipline policy. At any time during the review of an altercation, the Human Resources Division will be available for assistance upon request.

:5 FORMS:

None.

:6 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:

None.

:7 REFERENCE:

Procedure adopted by City Council October 21, 1996, Item 8 YY; amended May 24, 1999, Item 5-LL; amended April 3, 2000, Item 2PPP; amended September 15, 2003; amended May 3, 2004, Item A1; amended September 8, 2008, Item A16; amend May 10, 2010, Item A-2.

:8 EFFECTIVE DATE:

This procedure effective May 10, 2010.