

**TOWN OF DAVIE  
HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT**



**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE  
SOP #20-012**

**September 19, 2012**

**SUMMARY OF REVISED, DELETED, OR ADDED MATERIAL**

Revision	Date	Responsible Department	Description of Change
1	May 18, 2011	Human Resources	Initial Release
2	September 19, 2012	Human Resources	Revision

**APPROVALS:**

Author

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Town Administrator

Date

*9/24/12*

Date

*9-24-12*

### **1-1. PURPOSE.**

The Town of Davie (Town) is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. The Town of Davie strictly prohibits and will not tolerate any type of aggressive behavior or violence by any individual while in its offices, facilities, worksites, vehicles or during the performance of Town of Davie business. This includes violent, intimidating, aggressive or other threatening behavior (oral or physical) that has the potential to or results in physical injury, emotional trauma or otherwise places any person's safety or productivity at risk.

There is an absolute prohibition against employees carrying firearms or personal weapons onto any Town of Davie property, except as may be specifically authorized by law.

### **1-2. SCOPE.**

This operating procedure applies to all Town of Davie employees, volunteers, and contractors.

### **1-3. DEFINITIONS.**

- a. Workplace violence. Any act occurring on Town of Davie premises or during work-related duties, that:
  1. Threatens the safety of an employee and/or non-employee.
  2. Affects the health, life, or well-being of an employee and/or non-employee.
  3. Results in damage to property.
- b. Threat. The expression of intent to cause physical or mental harm regardless of whether the person communicating the threat has the present ability to carry out the threat and regardless of whether the threat is contingent, conditional or future.
- c. Imminent Danger. A situation of threatening behavior and verbalizations that does not respond to intervention, where the individual has the ability and means to do physical harm to himself or herself or others.
- d. Employee Assistance Program (EAP). A program designed to provide confidential assessment and referral to counseling. The Town of Davie contracts with Care 24 EAP for these services. Information by calling 1-888-887-4114.

### **1-4. POLICY.**

- a. All employees, regardless of status, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that
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may be dangerous to others. Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from the premises of the Town of Davie without proper authorization.

- b.** Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment as described in Town of Davie's Equal Employment Opportunities Policy.
  - c.** All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to your supervisor, the police if an emergency, or the Human Resources Department. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by customers, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible.
  - d.** All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor. Employees are not expected to place themselves at risk by intervening in violent events. In the event of an imminent life-threatening situation or perceived serious aggressive behavior, our policy is to attempt a safe escape and then call the emergency number (911).
  - e.** The Town of Davie will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical and lawful. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the Town of Davie may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending investigation.
  - f.** Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of (or actual) violence or who otherwise engages in behavior that the Town of Davie, in its sole and exclusive discretion, deems offensive or inappropriate, may be referred to the EAP for counseling or other appropriate treatment. Such employees will also be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
  - g.** The Town of Davie encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or the Human Resources Department before the situation escalates into potential violence. The Town of Davie is eager to assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.
  - h.** Conflicts between employees and customers may arise during dealings with the public. While the Town of Davie has a strong commitment to customer service, continuous abuse by a customer will not be tolerated. A supervisor should be requested to intervene if a customer becomes verbally abusive. If there is a concern over the possibility of physical violence, it should be immediately reported to the police.
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- i.** Some employees who are working in situations that may have a greater chance of violence directed toward them such as Field Customer Service Representatives for the Utilities Department and/or Code Compliance Inspectors may be allowed to carry pepper spray for their protection. These employees must have written approval for carrying pepper spray and have proper training to carry and use the device. Documentation of the approval and the training must be submitted to the Human Resources Department and kept in their personnel files. Employees will only use the pepper spray in defense of an imminent danger and will remove themselves from the situation as soon as possible. If pepper spray is used as a weapon, the employee must call the police department and report the incident and give a statement to the police. That police report will be submitted to the Human Resources Department Risk Manager. The Risk Manager will notify the Safety Committee in quarterly reports.
  - j.** The Town of Davie will make every effort to protect their employees from violence including allowing utility shut off assignments up to 6:00 pm. This requirement does not include emergencies such as restoring utilities or repairing water line breaks. Employees must wear department issued uniforms and/or their employee identification at all times when dealing with the public and are encouraged to notify citizens that they are present before entering private property. A police escort is available and employees are encouraged to request the police to accompany them for situations that may cause a violent situation to erupt. The telephone number for the police is 954-693-8200.
  - k.** Off the job situations involving personal disputes with relatives or others may result in an on the job confrontation. If a personal situation has escalated to the point that a restraining order or other type of court order is being pursued, the work location should also be included in the order. Supervisors and Human Resources should receive a copy of the court order and be provided with a description of the individual cited in the order.
  - l.** Employees who fear for their personal safety should immediately contact the Police Department if it is an emergency by dialing 911. Supervisors and the Human Resources Department should be informed as soon as is practical but at least within 1 hour of the situation resolving.
  - 1.** Early warning signs may include:

    - (i)** Carrying a concealed weapon or flashing a weapon to test reactions;
    - (ii)** Direct or veiled threats of harm;
    - (iii)** Intimidation of others (physical or verbal), e.g. harassing phone calls or stalking;
    - (iv)** Disregard for the safety of co-workers;
    - (v)** Paranoid behavior;
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- (vi) Unable to take criticism of job performance;
  - (vii) Holding a grudge against a co-worker or supervisor or verbalizing hope for something bad to happen to that person;
  - (viii) Obsessive involvement with the job, often with uneven job performance and no apparent outside interests;
  - (ix) History of violent or abusive behavior; and
  - (x) Expression of extreme desperation over recent family, financial, or personal problems.
2. Employees are encouraged to resolve conflict and to seek help through EAP. In the event of an occurrence of workplace violence, trauma counseling will be made available to affected employees.
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