

**CITY OF CLEVELAND**  
**Human Resources Policies and Procedures**  
**Workplace Policies**

**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY**

**Coverage**

This policy contains information and guidelines for City employees who are involved in or are witness to an employee engaged in violent, threatening or other related behavior that indicates violence may happen or has already occurred. The safety and well-being of our employees is of utmost importance and therefore the City has adopted a zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. Employees should familiarize themselves with this policy and associated guidelines to ensure their own safety and the safety of others.

- A. The City of Cleveland prohibits and will not tolerate workplace violence by an employee, supervisor, or third-party either on the City of Cleveland's premises or other locations where employees are engaged in work-related activities or are present as a condition of their employment.
- B. Violations of this policy shall be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination of employment.
- C. For purposes of this policy, workplace violence includes, but is not limited to:
  1. Making threatening remarks (written, electronic, or verbal).
  2. Aggressive or hostile acts such as shouting, using profanity, throwing objects at another person, shoving, hitting, fighting, or intentionally damaging property.
  3. Bullying, intimidating, or harassing another person (for example, making obscene phone calls or using threatening body language or gestures, such as standing close to someone or shaking your fist at them).
  4. Behavior that causes another person emotional distress or creates a reasonable fear of injury, such as stalking.
  5. Assault

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6. Battery
7. Unauthorized possession of weapons, including guns, knives, explosives, mace, and any other item with the potential to inflict harm that has no common purposes.

The City of Cleveland prohibits any form of discipline, reprisal, intimidation, or retaliation for reporting incidents of workplace violence, or cooperating in related investigations.

**I. MISSION STATEMENT**

This policy applies to all City of Cleveland employees and contract workers (including temporary workers supplied to the City from staffing agencies) whether full-time, part-time, or seasonal status and with either permanent or temporary appointments. It also applies to volunteers and interns working with or under the guidance of City employees.

**II. SITUATIONAL AWARENESS**

Situational awareness encompasses an individual's or team's capacity to perceive and comprehend their immediate environment, understand the context in which they operate, and identify the critical factors influencing their performance and decision-making. It involves actively perceiving, processing, and comprehending information about the situation, and using that understanding to make informed judgments and take appropriate actions. Situational awareness helps individuals anticipate and identify potential risk, make quick and effective decisions, and adapt to changing circumstances.

- A. Employees should always maintain situational awareness while working in the field. This includes being alert to their surroundings, identifying potential risks, and paying attention to changes in the environment. If a situation feels threatening or becomes high-stress, employees should follow the guidelines outlined below.

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**III. PERSONNEL SAFETY MEASURES**

- A. **Assess the Situation:** Employees should quickly evaluate the level of threat and determine whether it is safe to continue their work or terminate it. If there is an immediate risk to personal safety, employees must prioritize their well-being and seek assistance if necessary.
- B. **Retreat and Seek Shelter:** If possible, move to a safe location or retreat from the threatening or high-stress situation immediately. This may include seeking shelter in a secure building, vehicle, or other designated safe areas.
- C. **Contact Immediate Supervisor:** If a work task poses a risk to your well-being or needs to be terminated, please promptly notify your immediate supervisor, and communicate any concerns.
- D. **Contact Emergency Services:** In case of an emergency or imminent danger, employees are to immediately call 911, contact local law enforcement or emergency services. Provide them with accurate and detailed information about the situation, location, and any known risks.
- E. **Use Safety Tools:** Employees should utilize any safety tools or equipment provided by the City, such as panic buttons, personal alarms, or communication devices, to call for help and alert others about the situation.

**IV. DANGEROUS WEAPONS AND INSPECTION OF EMPLOYEE PROPERTY**

- A. To ensure that the City of Cleveland maintains a workplace safe and free of violence for all employees, the City prohibits the possession or use of dangerous weapons on City property. “Dangerous weapons” include, but are not limited to, firearms, explosives, knives, mace, and any item with the potential to inflict harm that has no common purpose. Employees are responsible for making sure that any item possessed by the employee is not prohibited by this policy.

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A firearm's use or possession is unauthorized unless the employee's appointing authority gives written authority for the employee's specific workplace, and is required as part of the employee's job duties with the City of Cleveland, or connected with training received from the City in order for the employee to perform the responsibilities of his or her job with the City.

- B. Employees have no expectation of privacy in any city-owned property, this includes but is not limited to desks, computers, lockers, phones, automobiles, and filing cabinets. The City also has the right, in limited circumstances, to inspect or authorize the inspection of employee property, including, packages, purses, lunch boxes, and automobiles.

When searching employee-owned property, the Appointing Authority should follow these guidelines:

1. Identify a reasonable suspicion of an individual's intent to violate this policy, or an individual's actual violation of this policy;
2. The Appointing Authority has notified and consulted with the Department of Human Resources (DHR) Labor Relations Division prior to commencing the inspection;
3. The inspection is conducted in a manner that respects the dignity of the employee(s) subject to the inspection; and,
4. The Appointing Authority shall document why the search was conducted, the scope of the search, and the results of the search. This documentation shall be forwarded to the Director of Human Resources.

**V. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BETWEEN CITY EMPLOYEES**

- A. In a case of workplace violence, immediate action by victims or witnesses is especially necessary. Therefore, an employee who experiences or witnesses workplace violence including conduct,

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behavior or communication that is prohibited by this policy, must immediately notify his or her supervisor, manager, or the Director of the Department to which he or she is assigned, and the Human Resources Department - Labor Relations Division. Employees who fail to report workplace violence may be subject to appropriate discipline up to and including termination of employment.

- B. Upon being informed of an allegation of workplace violence, the Department of Human Resources – Division of Labor Relations and the Department will immediately make arrangements to investigate to determine whether there is sufficient basis to place the employee on paid administrative leave pending further investigation. If the manager has reasonable suspicion to believe that the continued presence of the employee represents a danger to himself/herself, other employees or non-employees, the employee shall be placed on administrative leave with pay.
- C. An employee may be authorized to return to City employment if evidence gathered during the investigation substantiates that the employee no longer constitutes a threat to himself/herself or others. For violations that could lead to termination of employment, the employee may be placed on paid administrative leave until the completion of the investigation and subsequent proceedings.

**VI. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING INCIDENTS OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE BETWEEN A MEMBER OF THE PUBLIC AND A CITY EMPLOYEE.**

**A. Reporting**

All employees must report any threatening or incidents to their immediate supervisor or their designated point of contact within the City. Employees must provide a detailed written account of the event, including date, time, location, individuals involved (if known), and any witnesses present.

**B. Documenting**

Employees should submit any records or support of incidents, including, but not limited to, any relevant photographs, videos, or

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audio recordings, if it is safe and legally permissible to do so. Such documentation should be submitted to the employee's immediate supervisor, Appointing Authority, and the Human Resources Department. Supporting documentation can assist in subsequent investigations and/or legal proceedings.

**VII. Emotional Support and Assistance**

- A. **Employee Assistance Programs (EAP):** The City may provide access to our EAP or similar resources that offers confidential counseling services and support to employees who experience workplace violence incidents.
- B. **Managerial Support:** Supervisors and managers should be readily available to provide guidance, reassurance, and support to employees who have encountered workplace violence situations.
- C. **Follow-Up and Investigation:** The City will promptly investigate reported incidents, ensuring appropriate actions are taken.

**VIII. Training and Education**

The City will make available comprehensive training and educational programs regarding threatening circumstances in the workplace and in the field.

**IX. Confidentiality**

All complaints and investigations are treated confidentially to the extent possible and information is disclosed strictly on a need-to-know basis, but confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. The identity of the complainant often is revealed to the parties involved during the investigation, e.g. witnesses, alleged harasser, Union representative, etc.

**X. Policy Review**

This policy will be periodically reviewed and updated to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with best practices in employee safety and well-being.

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**XI. Additional Resources**

**Downtown Cleveland Alliance**

1010 Euclid Ave. #3

Cleveland, OH 44115

To report an issue or access safety escorts: 216-621-6000

**First Call for Help**

To request health services: 211

The safety and security of our employees will always be priority. Employees should familiarize themselves with this policy and seek clarification from their supervisors or the Human Resources Department if they have any questions or concerns.

**This policy has been issued under the authority of Matthew Cole, Director of Human Resources:**



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**Signature**

Director of Human Resources

**Title**

March 25, 2024

**Date**