

Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

The City of San Luis Obispo is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence. The top priority in this process is to identify the components frequently associated with workplace violence and to effectively handle critical workplace incidents, especially those dealing with actual or potential violence.

A. Violence or the threat of violence against or by any employee of City or any other person will not be tolerated.

- 1) Should a non-employee, on City property, demonstrate or threaten violent behavior he/she may be subject to criminal prosecution, or
- 2) Should an employee, during working hours, demonstrate or threaten violent behavior he/she may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, as well as criminal prosecution.

B. The following actions are among those that would be considered violent acts:

- 1) Striking, punching, slapping or assaulting another person.
- 2) Fighting or challenging another person to fight.
- 3) Engaging in dangerous, threatening or unwanted physical contact.
- 4) Possession, use, or threat of use, of a gun, knife or other weapon of any kind on City property, including parking lots, other exterior premises, City vehicles, or while engaged in activities for the City in other locations, unless such possession or use is a requirement of the employee's duties for the City.
 - a. A potentially dangerous weapon is permissible when it is lawfully carried, possessed or controlled in good faith by an employee for use in connection with or during their assigned usual and customary duties for the City.
 - b. The lawful possession of a weapon in a personal vehicle driven or parked on City property for the purpose of lawful recreation before or after working hours is not prohibited by this section, so long as the weapon is secured out of public view in a locked compartment of the vehicle and is not used or publicly displayed during working hours or on City property.
 - c. This section does not consider common eating utensils (e.g. knives or forks) as weapons except when used in a threatening manner.
- 5) Threatening harm or harming another person, joking about such harm, or any other action or conduct that implies the threat of bodily harm.
- 6) Verbally abusive or threatening behaviors.

C. Any employee who is the victim of any threatening or harassing conduct, any witness to such conduct, or anyone receiving a report of such conduct, whether the perpetrator is a City employee or a non-employee, shall immediately report the incident to any of the following. (There is no need to follow the chain of command).

- 1) Immediate supervisor;
- 2) Any supervisor or manager within or outside of the department;
- 3) Department Head; or
- 4) Director of Human Resources.

D. Any employee who is the victim of any threat of violence or violent contact with an employee or non-employee shall immediately seek safety and report the incident.

Reporting Procedure:

- 1) Emergency situations – If possible, distance yourself from the perpetrator, then call 9-1-1 (or 9-9-1-1 from City extensions).
- 2) Non-emergency situations – Call dispatch at (805) 781-7312 (or 7312 from City extensions).

The report should include your name, location, the name of the perpetrator, the nature of the problem and whether weapons are involved. Try to remain calm.

E. Any employee who has received a court protective order (e.g. emergency protective order, restraining order or injunction) against another individual or individuals, based upon fear or threat of physical harm by a third party, should, immediately upon returning to work, provide a copy of such order to his or her direct supervisor and the Director of Human Resources and provide a physical description of the person(s) that is (are) the subject of such order. The employee should carry a certified copy of the order on his/her person at all times. This information may be shared on a need to know basis to ensure safety and security, including providing such information to those who work at entrances to City buildings or facilities (e.g. front counter staff).

F. Any employee, reported to be a perpetrator, will be afforded due process and an opportunity to obtain representation prior to an administrative interview or in the event City disciplinary action is taken.

G. In the event the City fears for the safety of the perpetrator or the safety of others, law enforcement will be called.

H. Warning Signs

- 1) The person is unusually argumentative or uncooperative.
- 2) The person exhibits extreme or bizarre behavior.
- 3) The person displays obvious changes in work patterns such as tardiness, absenteeism or poor work performance, emotional swings.
- 4) The person talks about guns or other weapons, or violent acts.

Any employee, supervisor or department head who perceives a potentially volatile situation should notify his or her supervisor, department head or the Director of Human Resources and take appropriate steps to warn others of the potential threat immediately.

I. Security and Assessment

- 1) A work site analysis may be conducted to identify existing conditions, operations and conditions that might create or contribute to potential workplace violence issues. Employees may request a work site analysis by contacting the Human Resources Manager at (805) 781-7253. Work site analyses will be coordinated

with the department and Police Department personnel and a report outlining recommendations will be submitted to the Department Head and City Manager.

J. Violation of this Policy

- 1) Any employee engaging in violent acts is in violation of this policy and will be subject to disciplinary action up to, and including termination.
- 2) Reporting of a violent occurrence is mandatory and failure to do so could result in disciplinary action up to, and including termination.

K. Retaliation or harassment against any person acting in good faith that initiates a complaint or reports an incident under this policy will not be tolerated by the City and will subject any employee engaging in such harassment or retaliation to discipline, up to and including termination.

L. Resources

- 1) [Employee Assistance Plan website](#)
- 2) [Family Law Self-Help Center, San Luis Obispo](#)
- 3) [SLO County Crisis Intervention Information](#)
- 4) [Run, Hide, Fight video](#)
- 5) [Workplace Violence Safety Act](#)