

2024 DSS Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Refresher

It is essential that DSS managers, and supervisor's, review the updated policy and the current guidelines with their staff.

For your convenience, the link below will send you directly to the 2024 DSS Specific Workplace Violence Prevention policy, to the 1999 Executive Order, and to the appropriate reporting protocol.

Please familiarize yourself and your staff with these policies and procedures. You may wish to print these forms to create a paper file or simply create an electronic file.

If it is necessary to file an SEC-1 or you receive an SEC-1 from an employee, it must be sent immediately to Labor Relations to the attention of Mike Vasile, Labor Relations Manager.

Managers must take note of the aftercare checklist form. Should it be necessary for this form to be completed, Labor Relations will notify you.

Please contact your Labor Relations Liaison with any questions.

<https://ctgovexec.sharepoint.com/sites/InsideDSS/SitePages/Human-Resources.aspx>



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE PREVENTION POLICY

The State of Connecticut has adopted a statewide zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. The Department of Social Services fully supports this policy and recognizes the right of its employees to work in a safe and secure environment that is characterized by respect and professionalism.

Prohibited Conduct

Except as may be required as a condition of employment:

No employee shall bring into any state worksite any weapon or dangerous instrument as defined herein.

No employee shall use, attempt to use, or threaten to use any such weapon or dangerous instrument in a state worksite.

No employee shall cause or threaten to cause death or physical injury to any individual in a state worksite.

In addition, the Department of Social Services prohibits all conduct, either verbal or physical, that is abusive, threatening, intimidating, or demeaning.

Definitions

"Weapon" means any firearm, including a BB gun, whether loaded or unloaded, any knife (excluding a small pen or pocketknife), including a switchblade or other knife having an automatic spring release device, a stiletto, any police baton or nightstick or any martial arts weapon or electronic defense weapon.

"Dangerous instrument" means any instrument, article, or substance that, under the circumstances, is capable of causing death or serious physical injury.

Confiscation of Weapons and Dangerous Instruments

Any weapon or dangerous instrument at the worksite will be confiscated and there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with respect to such items in the workplace.

Reporting Procedures

Emergency Situations: Any employee who believes that there is a serious threat to his/her safety or the safety of others that requires immediate attention should contact **911**. The employee must also contact his/her **immediate supervisor** or the **Labor Relations Unit at 860-424-5090**.

Please note that when 911 is dialed from a hard line, the local police authority will respond. When dialing from a cell phone, 911 will connect you directly to the nearest State Police Troop.

Non-Emergency Situations: any employee who feels subjected to or witnesses violent, threatening, harassing, or intimidating behavior in the workplace should immediately report the incident or statement to his/her supervisor or manager, the Labor Relations Unit, or the Agency.

Supervisors/Managers Responsibilities: Any manager or supervisor who receives a report of violent, threatening, harassing, or intimidating behavior shall immediately contact the Labor Relations Unit so that office may evaluate, investigate, and take appropriate action.

Investigation and Corrective Action

The Department of Social Services will promptly investigate all reports or alleged incidents of violent, threatening, harassing or intimidating behavior.

All employees are expected to cooperate fully in all such investigations.

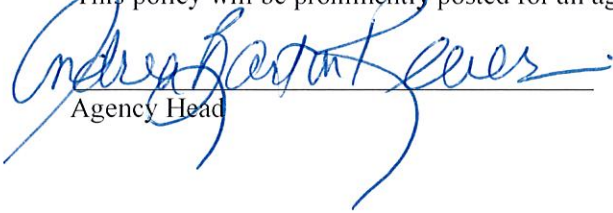
Any employee suspected of violating this policy may be placed immediately on administrative leave pending the results of the investigation.

If the claims of violent, threatening, harassing or intimidating conduct are substantiated, or if it is found that the employee has otherwise violated this policy, the employee will be dealt with through the appropriate disciplinary process, and may be subject to discipline up to and including dismissal from state service.

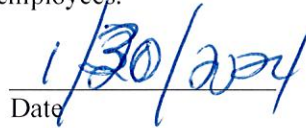
Where the situation warrants, The Department of Social Services will request that the appropriate law enforcement agencies become involved in the investigation of the matter, and the Department of Social Services may seek prosecution of conduct that violates the law.

Enforcement of the Policy

This policy will be prominently posted for all agency employees.



Agency Head



Date



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

THE THREAT ASSESSMENT TEAM

The Threat Assessment Team (TAT) is responsible for handling workplace violence complaints regarding behaviors and activities that violate this policy, assessing the agency's vulnerability to workplace violence, and reaching agreement on preventative actions.

Membership

TAT members may include:

Labor Relations	Michael Vasile Kelly Geary	(860) 424-5090 (860) 424-5083
EAP Provider- Solutions, Inc.		(800) 526-3485
Facility Operations	William Lovejoy Joseph Joseph Nick Barnett	(860) 990-7263 (860) 989-9621 (860) 834-2104
Internal Security	55 Farmington Ave.	(860) 622-2153
DAS Statewide Security (as needed)	Ray Philbrick	(860) 713-5811
Legal Counsel	Matthew Antonetti	(860) 424-5104
Equal Employment Equity & Diversity	Astread Ferron-Poole Kallie Gulino	(860) 424-5510 (860) 424-5501
Representative from the statewide Office of Labor Relations (available for consultation as needed)		(860) 418-6289
Representative from the Office of Victim Advocate (available for consultation as needed)		(860) 550-6632
Ad Hoc manager (the manager of the person reporting the incident or a designee)		
If dealing with a member of a union, it may be helpful to have a high ranking union official involved Michael Vasile		(860) 424-5090

When choosing team members, select decision-makers that have the necessary skills to complement the team. All employees should be provided with an opportunity to personally meet the members of this team to show management's commitment to deal with incidents and to raise the comfort level of employees in seeking assistance from team members.

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Role of Threat Assessment Team

This team will be addressing threats as well as incidents of actual violence. One goal of this team approach is to ensure that people are prepared to work together to deal with these situations. Although violence cannot always be prevented, planning ahead and being prepared to act swiftly to deal with threats, intimidation and other disruptive behaviors at an early stage can reduce the risk. In assisting the HR office, the team has three major functions:

1. **Identifying the potential for violence** – identify and analyze any apparent trend in incidents relating to particular units, jobs, activities, time of day and so forth.
2. **Prevention** – adopt procedures agency wide to prevent the occurrence of violence, recommend/implement employee training programs on workplace violence, communicate internally with employees, inspect the workplace, evaluate the work tasks of employees to determine risk levels, conduct follow-up audits, conduct employee surveys, advise on improvements in physical measures, equipment, and work practices, etc.
3. **Responding to individual acts of violence** – incidents will be reported to and evaluated by the Threat Assessment Team. The team will guide the investigation and intervention process as it deems appropriate. This may entail planning a response and mitigating further damage, coordinating responses with law enforcement and the community, managing the media, and inspecting the workplace periodically to discover and correct hazards.

Availability

All employees should be able to obtain help or assistance from any member of the Threat Assessment Team and from the HR office. Agencies shall make a provision for workers who work second or third shift or on weekends to obtain this assistance. There are three ways to do this. One way is to select team members who can provide this type of coverage. A second way is to provide an off-hours phone (landline or cell) number to access a team member. Third, alternate or backup team members who are available should be identified.

Small Agencies

Smaller agencies that are unable to convene a full Threat Assessment Team should establish a relationship with an agency that can assist in providing support resources to them.

Checklist for Human Resources Offices

HR offices in each Executive Branch agency or office, in order to ensure compliance with the Violence in the Workplace Policy and Procedures Manual, are required to fill out the following Checklist. The agency HR Professional must place a check mark (✓) in the box signifying compliance. This checklist is to be signed and dated by the HR Professional and the Agency Head (or his/her designee) and submitted to the Statewide Director of Security and Safety Management annually, no later than January 31 for the year prior.

DSS Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

- The Violence in the Workplace Policy Prevention Policy (Appendix A of the State of Connecticut Violence in the Workplace Policy and Procedures Manual, hereinafter the "Manual") has been customized with agency specific information.
- The agency's Policy has been distributed to agency employees and it has been posted in prominent places throughout the agency, per page 16 of the Manual.
- The agency's Policy is included in the agency's employee orientation documentation and procedures.
- Agency specific, wallet sized "Contact Cards" customized with emergency contact names and phone numbers have been prepared and distributed per page 16 of the Manual.
- A Threat Assessment Team (TAT) has been established to handle workplace violence complaints per page 17 of the Manual.
- Ongoing workplace assessments and prevention strategies have been established per page 17 of the Manual.
- All new full-time employees of the agency, hired after January 1, 2012, have been provided or are scheduled to receive mandatory workplace violence prevention training within six months of hire, pursuant to Public Act 11-33.
- All full-time employees of the agency hired prior January 1, 2012, have been provided or are scheduled to receive mandatory workplace violence prevention training pursuant to Public Act 11-33.
- All other necessary training and education needs have been assessed and provided per page 17 of the Manual.

- All complaints were responded to and investigated. Any necessary response procedures were implemented per page 16 of the Manual.
- Regular reviews of emergency and non-emergency (threatening) incidents were conducted and monitored to ensure their effectiveness per page 17 of the Manual.
- Coordinated with Threat Assessment Team on number and type of incidences for required reports to DAS Statewide Security

Kelly Geary

1/23/24

Labor Relations

Date


Commissioner or Designee

1/30/2024
Date

Return to: Statewide Director of Security & Safety Management
450 Columbus Boulevard
Plaza level – South Tower
Hartford, Connecticut 06106