

Whitman County Workplace Violence Prevention Program

1. Purpose and Summary

Whitman County is committed to employee safety and health. The County does not tolerate violence in the workplace and will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring by implementing the following Workplace Violence Prevention Program (WVPP).

Each manager, supervisor, and employee is responsible for implementing and maintaining the WVPP and is encouraged to participate in designing and implementing the program. All employees must adhere to work practices that are designed to make the workplace more secure, and must not make verbal threats or physical actions that create a security hazard for others in the workplace.

All employees will have training and instruction by their department on general and job-specific workplace security practices. Training is provided to all new employees and to other employees for whom training has not previously been provided. Additional training and instruction will be provided to all personnel whenever the employer is made aware of new or previously unrecognized security hazards.

Every employee is required to promptly and to accurately report all violent incidents or potentially dangerous situations whether or not physical injury has occurred. If an actual threat or act has taken place, the victim must complete the Violent Act/Threat Reporting Form available from all departmental supervisors or Human Resources. Also, any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a supervisor or to the HR Department for investigation and remedy.

A copy of County Policy: **POL-0100-40-HR PREVENTING & RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE** is readily available to all employees through Human Resources and at whitmancounty.org/Departments/Human Resources.

2. Program Responsibility

Human Resources:

1. Administration and broad oversight of the County Workplace Violence Prevention policy;
2. Maintaining appropriate files and records;
3. Assisting departments and offices in the development of audits or surveys and specific procedures need to implement this policy;
4. Reviewing reported incidence of this policy and reporting them to the Incident Team; and
5. Assuring employees will not be discriminated or retaliated against for filing appropriate workplace violence complaints.

All Manager and Supervisor:

1. Knowing and complying with the provisions of this policy;
2. Providing safety/security training to employees within their department;
3. Providing periodic evaluation of potential workplace violence;
4. Providing the opportunity for employees to receive training about workplace violence prevention;
5. Addressing employee personal safety concerns and promptly reporting incidents and hazards to Human Resources, the Safety Committee or Incident Team;
6. Developing and maintaining field procedures to avoid or appropriately deal with situations where violence acts can be anticipated;
7. Consult with Human Resources as appropriate; and
8. Obtaining appropriate pre-employment references prior to making hiring decisions.

Employees:

1. Knowing and complying with provisions of this policy;
2. Using safe work practices;
3. Participating in training about workplace violence prevention;
4. Contacting the 911 emergency center following the approved office procedure if they believe a violent incident is imminent;
5. Reporting concerns for personal safety while conducting the County business to their supervisors;
6. Immediately reporting situations where there is a fear that physical retaliation may take place or where someone has made verbal threats of violence;
7. Documenting reports of workplace violence on the Assault/Threat form and turn it in to HR and the supervisor; and
8. Refraining from any behavior that is threatening, frightening or intimidating, and any physical violence.

Incident Team:

1. Assess the vulnerability to workplace violence and reach agreement on preventative actions to be taken;
2. Reviewing employee training in violence prevention;
3. Reviewing plans for responding to acts of violence;
4. Audit the overall WVPP compliance annually and recommend changes as needed.

3. Communication of the WVPP

All employees, including supervisors and managers, must comply with work practices that are designed to make the workplace more secure, and will not engage in threats or physical actions which create a security hazard. To encourage compliance county departments will:

- Inform employees, supervisors, and managers about our WVPP;
- Evaluate the performance of all employees in complying with our workplace security measures;
- Provide training and/or counseling to employees who need to improve work practices designed to ensure workplace security; and
- Discipline employees for failure to comply with workplace security practices

Whitman County recognizes that to maintain a safe, healthy and secure workplace there must be open, two-way communication between all employees, including managers and supervisors, on all workplace safety, health and security issues. A communication system designed to encourage a continuous flow of safety, health, and security information between management and our employees without fear of reprisal and in a form that is readily understandable is vital. Our communication system consists of the following items:

- New employee orientation on the County's workplace security policies, procedures and work practices;
- Periodic distribution of our WVPP with all personnel;
- Periodic training related to workplace violence;
- Regularly scheduled safety committee meetings that include workplace security discussions;
- Posted or distributed workplace security information;
- A procedure for employees to inform management about workplace security hazards or threats of violence; and
- Procedures for protecting employees that report threats from retaliation by the person making the threats

4. Record Keeping and Review

Annual updates and reviews of the following workplace violence reports and records will be made:

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 300 logs
- Workplace violence incident reports
- Annual Threat & Assault Log
- Police Reports
- Accident Investigations
- Training Records
- Grievances
- Inspection Information from reports of security hazards
- Other relevant records or information

The WC Incident Team will complete the report and record review by the end of July each year.

5. Workplace Security Inspections

Periodic inspections to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards and threats of workplace violence will be coordinated by the WC Incident Team and Safety Committee. Periodic inspections are performed according to the following schedule:

- When we initially established our Workplace Violence Prevention Program
- When new, previously unidentified security hazards are recognized
- Whenever workplace security conditions warrant an inspection

Workplace hazards are best identified by the department working in each location. For this reason each department may, as needed, submit a hazard survey to the Incident Team. The concerns and ideas are then reviewed by the Team for possible action. Periodic inspections for security hazards consist of identification and evaluation of workplace security hazards and changes in employee work practices, and may require assessing for more than one type of workplace violence. The County performs inspections for each type of workplace violence by using the methods specified below to identify and evaluate workplace security hazards.

Inspections for workplace security hazards from violence by strangers (Type 1) include assessing:

- The exterior and interior of the workplace for its attractiveness to robbers
- The need for security surveillance measures, such as mirrors or cameras
- Position of signs notifying the public that limited cash is kept on the premises
- Procedures for employee response during a robbery or other criminal act
- Procedures for reporting suspicious persons or activities
- Posting of emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement, fire and medical services where employees have access to a telephone with an outside line
- Limiting the amount of cash on hand
- Staffing levels during evening hours of operation and at other high risk times
- The use of work practices such as “buddy” systems, as appropriate, for identified risks (e.g., walking employees to their cars or mass transit stops at the end of the work day)
- Adequacy of lighting and security for designated parking lots or areas
- Electronic firewalls, anti-virus software, anti-spam software, etc.

Inspections for workplace security hazards from violence by customers or clients (Type 2) include assessing:

- Access to, and freedom of movement within, the workplace
- Adequacy of workplace security systems, such as door locks, security windows, physical barriers and restraint systems
- Frequency and severity of threatening or hostile situations that may lead to violent acts by persons who are service recipients of our establishment
- Employee’s skill in safely handling threatening or hostile service recipients
- Effectiveness of systems and procedures to warn others of a security danger or to summon assistance, e.g. alarms or panic buttons
- The use of work practices such as “buddy” systems, as appropriate, for identified risks (e.g., walking employees to their cars or mass transit stops at the end of the work day)
- Adequacy of lighting and security for designated parking lots or areas
- The availability of employee escape routes
- Electronic firewalls, anti-virus software, anti-spam software, etc.

Inspections for workplace security hazards from violence by co-workers (Type 3) include assessing:

- How well the anti-violence policy has been communicated to employees, supervisors and managers

- How well management and employees communicate with each other
- How well employees, supervisors and managers know the warning signs of potential workplace violence
- Access to, and freedom of movement within, the workplace by non-employees, specifically recently discharged employees
- Frequency and severity of employee-reported threats of physical or verbal abuse by managers, supervisors or other employees
- Any prior violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs of strain or pressure in the workplace
- Employee disciplinary and discharge procedures
- Electronic firewalls, anti-virus software, anti-spam software, etc.

Inspections for workplace security hazards from violence by personal relations (Type 4) include assessing:

- Access to, and freedom of movement within, the workplace by non-employees, specifically personal relations with whom one of our employee's is having a dispute
- Frequency and severity of employee-reported threats of physical or verbal abuse which may lead to violent acts by a personal relation
- Adequacy of workplace security systems, such as door locks, security windows, and physical barriers
- Any prior violent acts, threats of physical violence, verbal abuse, property damage or other signs
- The use of work practices such as "buddy" systems, as appropriate, for identified risks (e.g., walking employees to their cars or mass transit stops at the end of the work day)
- Adequacy of lighting and security for designated parking lots or areas
- Warning or police involvement to remove personal relations of employees from the work site and effectiveness of restraining orders
- Electronic firewalls, anti-virus software, anti-spam software, etc.

Responses to hazard inspections and security incidents include the following measures:

- **Engineering Controls and Building or Work Area Design:**

A list of possible safety projects and tasks is annually compiled and updated. See appendix A.

- **Workplace Practices:**

Training/instruction of staff, reporting procedures for possible/actual violent acts or threats, County POL-0100-40-HR enforcement, and monitoring, maintenance, and improvement of the County's WVPP.

6. Training and Instruction

All employees, including managers and supervisors, will have training and instruction on general and job-specific workplace security practices. Training shall be provided to all new employees. It shall also be provided to all employees, supervisors, and managers given new job assignments for which specific workplace security training for the job assignment has not previously been provided. Additional training and instruction will be provided to all personnel whenever the employer is made aware of new or previously unrecognized security hazards.

General workplace violence and security training and instruction includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Explanation of the WVPP including measures for reporting any violent acts or threats of violence
- Recognition of workplace security hazards including the risk factors associated with the four types of violence
- Procedures for reporting workplace security hazards or threats to managers and supervisors
- Measures to summon others for assistance
- Notification of law enforcement authorities when a criminal act may have occurred
- Post-event trauma counseling for those employees desiring such assistance
- The availability of an employee assistance program(s) to access pre and/or post incident services

In addition, the County provides specific instructions to all employees regarding workplace security hazards unique to their job assignment, to the extent that such information was not already covered in other training. We have chosen the following items for training and instruction for managers, supervisors and employees:

- Crime awareness
- Measures to prevent workplace violence
- Employee routes of escape
- Location and operation of alarm systems, panic buttons and other protective devices.
- Communication procedures
- Proper work practices for specific workplace activities, occupations or assignments, such as law enforcement, health care, public transportation, etc.
- Self-protection
- Dealing with angry, hostile or threatening individuals
- Using the “buddy” system or other assistance from co-employees
- Awareness of indicators that lead to violent acts by service recipients
- Employee assistance programs
- Review of anti-violence policy and procedures
- Managing with respect and consideration for employee well-being
- Pre-employment screening practices
- Possibly role playing a violent incident

7. Incident Investigation

Once reported to Human Resources in compliance with procedure 100-40-1-HR, the Human Resources Director will:

- Reviewing all previous incidents
- Visit the scene of an incident as soon as possible
- Interview threatened or injured employees and witnesses
- Examine the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident, including any previous reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator
- Determine the cause of the incident
- Consult with the department and Incident Team regarding corrective action to prevent the incident from recurring
- Record the findings and corrective actions taken