



Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention Policy

Purpose

Forsyth County has adopted the following guidelines to deal with threats of or actual violence that may occur onsite or offsite during work-related activities.

Policy

The County will not tolerate intimidation, threats, verbal abuse, bullying, physical attacks, or any other act of violence against employees, visitors, customers, county facilities or property. This includes such conduct by anyone on County property, or on a County-controlled site and in connection with County employment or County business. This zero-tolerance policy also prohibits such conduct while not at work if there is a potential adverse impact on an employee's ability to perform their assigned duties. Although nothing can guarantee that an employee will not become a victim of workplace violence, this policy provides information which will assist the County with its efforts to keep the County free from violence or the threat of violence.

Whether perpetrated by or towards an employee, any violence or the threat of violence is strictly prohibited. A violation of this policy will lead to an investigation and corrective action up to and including a separation from employment or if applicable, a referral for prosecution.

Employee Responsibilities

Employees should be alert to the possibility of violence by employees, former employees, customers, and visitors; should take seriously any violent act or threat against themselves or others, should not attempt to handle a violent or potentially violent incident on their own, and should report such acts of violence or threats as follows:

- **Call 911 -- Violence or Imminent Violence:** Employees shall call law enforcement immediately if employees believe a danger exists or if a danger is imminent which could cause death or serious physical harm. After calling law enforcement, employees shall notify their Department Manager, or any supervisor, or any on-site security.
- **Threat of Violence.** Employees who witness a threat, or receive a threat, or are on notice of a threat to another; shall immediately notify their Department Manager, or any supervisor, or any on-site security.
- **Potential Threat.** Employees shall report any behavior that they witness and regard as potentially threatening or violent if it is carried out in connection with County employment or County business and shall do so even without a specific threat, and regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the behavior and the person being threatened.
- **Additional County Contacts.** Employees should report to the Human Resources Director, Risk Manager, or the Attorney's Office if unable to contact the Department Manager, a supervisor, or on-site security.

Consequences for Engaging in Violence or the Threat of Violence

If there is a reasonable suspicion of violence or a threat of violence, an individual may be required to undergo an assessment coordinated by the Employee Assistance Program ("EAP") in order to determine the nature or severity of the risk. Compliance with recommended treatment is mandatory. Further:

- Violation of this policy, to include a failure to report, is deemed misconduct under the County Disciplinary Action Policy which subjects an employee to a reassignment of job duties or disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.
- The County reserves the right to take any necessary legal action to protect its employees including but not limited to a referral to a law enforcement agency which may result in arrest and criminal or civil prosecution in order to help keep its premises safe and secure.
- Dependent upon the nature of the violation, individuals shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits and shall remain off County property pending the outcome of an investigation.
- Corrective action may also include a suspension or a termination of any business relationship.

Retaliation is prohibited against any employee who files a report in good faith. If there is reasonable suspicion, the County may conduct searches under the County Workplace Searches Policy.

Employee Options

The County will work closely with victims to review all available options such as security measures, the use of Employee Assistance Program ("EAP"), or referral to another agency.

Confidentiality

County management understands that some requested information may be sensitive. County confidentiality procedures are developed in recognition and respect for the privacy of the reporting employee and the victim to the extent it is practicable to keep such reporting anonymous. Of course, the County cannot promise absolute confidentiality. Disclosure may be required on a "need-to-know" basis such as to law enforcement if it is involved or if further governmental reporting is required.

Additional Employee Resources

See FCNET under the heading "**Workplace Violence Awareness and Prevention**" for additional information to include Guidelines for Responding to an Active Shooter, Incident Reporting, Departmental Security, Suspicious Package, and Community Resources that employees may privately access.