

PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

1. PURPOSE: It is the purpose of this policy to prevent and manage incidents of workplace violence, harassment, bullying, intimidation, threats, stalking, and/or physical violence committed by employees, volunteers, visitors, or trainees. This policy also addresses the importance of preventing and managing potential disruption of the workplace created by domestic threats in the lives of employees, volunteers, or trainees.

2. POLICY: It is the policy of VA Roseburg Healthcare System (VARHS) to promote an optimal degree of safety for patients, students, visitors, volunteers and employees. Violent behavior in this medical center and other locations where facility employees are required to perform their duties is an occupational health hazard. Preventing violent behavior in the workplace greatly enhances services provided by allowing staff to safely interact with patients, students, visitors, volunteers, and employees. The medical center will not tolerate and will take appropriate action for violent incident(s) in the workplace. Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including removal from employment. These acts may also result in criminal prosecution.

a. Each employee who receives a restraining, anti-stalking, or other protective order that lists VA property as a protected area is required to provide the VA Police with a copy of such order. Employee(s) with a restraining, anti-stalking, or other protective order will immediately advise VA Police when that order has been removed.

b. Workplace violence, threats of violence of any nature by patients, students, visitors, volunteers, and employees will be reported to the VA Police for appropriate action.

c. Instances where an employee is subject to behavioral violations that do not constitute a threat (workplace violence) to the safety of patients, students, visitors, volunteers, and employees will be reported to his/her supervisor. If it is not feasible to report the behavioral violation to his/her supervisor, it should be reported to the next level up in his/her supervisory chain of command immediately.

3. DEFINITIONS:

a. **Workplace Violence:** behavior, verbalizations, and electronic or written communications that may, by inspiring fear of violence, impair the ability of employees, volunteers, or trainees to perform their duties. Behaviors/communications that would create fear of violence may include physical or verbal actions that could be interpreted as:

(1) Assaults;

(2) Threats of violence;

(3) Harassment that inspires fear;

- (4) Bullying;
- (5) Stalking; and/or
- (6) Intimidation.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES:

a. **The Director** is responsible for:

- (1) The safety of all persons in the medical center;
- (2) Authorizing the assessment of potential threats as appropriate; and
- (3) Approval and distribution of final reports from the Chief of Police, Human Resources (HR) Service Manager, and appropriate Service Manager. Distribution is on a need to know basis.

b. **The Police** are responsible for:

- (1) Reviewing security measures, legal issues, such as restraining orders, etc., as appropriate, to ensure that this policy is effectively implemented;
- (2) Notifying the Service Manager(s) of workplace violence incident(s);
- (3) Conducting a preliminary investigation of the incident upon being informed of an allegation of workplace violence. The Chief of Police will determine if a crime has been committed and if so will present the report to the U.S. Attorney for criminal prosecution. If the incident is determined not to be of a criminal nature, the Chief of Police will present the findings to the HR Chief and affected service manager; and
- (4) Notifying the alleged victim and implementing a plan of action to assure safety of the victim is maintained.

c. **Supervisors** are responsible for:

- (1) Supporting VA Roseburg Healthcare System (VARHS) principle of, and rationale for, keeping work environments safe from violence;
- (2) Ensuring that all employees read and sign Workplace Violence Zero Tolerance Statement (Attachment A) indicating their understanding and commitment to workplace violence prevention;
- (3) Reporting all potential situations of violence that they become aware of to the VA Police; and

(4) Investigating the complaint. Upon being notified by the VA Police Chief of a complaint of workplace violence by one of their employees, The Supervisor must investigate the complaint and determine appropriate action with the Service Manager.

d. **The Service Manager** is responsible for:

(1) Reviewing all complaints of violent behavior with the HR Chief to determine if it meets criteria for violent behavior;

(2) Communicating with the supervisor if the incident does not meet the criteria for violent behavior;

(3) Making recommendations for follow-up or recommending an administrative investigation if it is determined the alleged victim meets the criteria for violent behavior; and

(4) Preparing a final report with actions taken as appropriate for the Director.

e. **Employees** are responsible for:

(1) Immediately reporting any acts of violent behavior they experience or witness by contacting the VA Police and informing their supervisor. If VA Police are notified initially, the Police will notify the appropriate supervisor;

(2) Reading, signing the Workplace Violence Zero Tolerance Statement, and abiding by this policy; and

(3) Cooperating fully with investigations of violence or threats and provide reports as requested. Those whose actions violate this procedure may be subject to appropriate administrative disciplinary action.

f. **Human Resources Management** is responsible for:

(1) Assisting with appropriate investigation of claims of violent behavior;

(2) Advising supervisors on strategies to address and resolve concerns in the workplace dealing with violent behavior; and

(3) Forwarding any Human Resource Management proposed action(s) resulting from the assessment to the Associate Director, AFGE, and the appropriate supervisor.

5. PROCEDURES:

a. Report all acts of violent behavior to the VA Police. If during an act of violence you feel you are in immediate danger, contact police by dialing *35 from any medical center phone.

b. Police will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine if the incident should be forwarded to the U.S. Attorney for prosecution or reviewed by Human Resources and the Service Manager.

c. HR Manager and Service Manager will determine if the alleged incident meets the criteria for violent behavior and will make recommendations to return it to the supervisor for follow-up or conduct an administrative investigation.

(1) The Service Manager will provide a final report of actions taken and will forward the report to the Director for approval.

d. Acts of violence by a Veteran in a clinical setting will follow procedure found in MCM 1352, Prevention and Management of Disruptive Behavior.

e. Police will track, trend and semiannually will report the types of incidences and interventions applied to the Environment of Care Committee.

6. REFERENCES:

VHA Directive 2010-026, Sexual Assaults and other Defined Public Safety Incidents in Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Facilities (September 2012)

Labor/Management Master Agreement

Labor/Management Supplemental Agreement

7. RESCISSION:

MCM 653-007-010, Prevention of Workplace Violence (December 2011)

(Original signed copy on file in QM office)

Douglas V. Paxton, FACHE
Director

ATTACHMENTS

A. Workplace Violence Zero Tolerance Statement.

**VA Roseburg Healthcare System
Roseburg, Oregon
Workplace Violence Zero Tolerance
STATEMENT**

As private citizens, we have all become aware of the apparent increase of violence in our society. Sadly, violence also appears to be increasing in our workplace. These violent acts can occur for a number of reasons and can involve outsiders as well as coworkers.

Our Healthcare Facility is dedicated to providing a quality work life for our employees. A major component of a quality work life is safety on the job. No one can ensure absolute safety from violence at the workplace. There are simply too many factors involved in these events. However, we can each do our part in decreasing the possibility of workplace violence.

The purpose of this document is to affirm the commitment of each and every one of us to the principle of eliminating workplace violence at our Healthcare Facility.

Workplace violence and threats of violence by any employee are not acceptable. Acts of violence and threats of violence will be treated on an individual basis as conduct violations and will be met with a response that is commensurate with the seriousness of the act in question. In each case, due process will be followed and employee rights will be honored.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) represents a major resource for employees who might be troubled. An EAP Counselor may be accessed through the computer phone directory by typing in EAP.

Let's all work together to decrease the possibility of workplace violence and to assure that our Healthcare Facility is a safe place to work.

(Signed copy available on SharePoint)

Douglas V. Paxton, FACHE
Director, VA Roseburg Healthcare System

President, AFGE Local #1042

Employee Signature: _____

Employee's Team: _____

Date Signed: _____