



MARICOPA COUNTY INTERNAL POLICY

Policy Title: RECOGNIZING AND REPORTING THREATS AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE	Policy Number: HR2408
	Current Adoption Date: 1-11-2017 Current Implementation Date: 1-11-2017
Approved by: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS	Board Agenda Number: C-49-17-015-6-00
	Original Adoption Date: 7-1998

I. PURPOSE

To give direction to employees, managers and Appointing Authorities when they encounter Threats or acts of Violence among co-workers, managers and visitors.

II. DEFINITIONS

- A. Administrative Investigation:** A review of allegations conducted by the County's or Department's Human Resources Department with the employees, witnesses, Security Services, relevant management and, where applicable, local law enforcement, in order to document the events and conduct of employees prior to any disciplinary action in accordance with [County Policy HR2401 Informal/Formal Discipline](#).
- B. Appointing Authority:** An elected official, the single administrative or executive head of a Department/Special District, or the designated representative authorized to act in this capacity.
- C. OSHA:** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration.
- D. Threat:** An occurrence, individual, entity, or action that has or indicates the potential to harm life, information, operations, and/or property. An **imminent threat** is when the Threat is happening or can happen in the immediate future. A **non-imminent threat** is when the Threat might happen at some point in time not in the immediate future.
- E. Violence:** A Threat or act which is alarming, intimidating or coercive made in relation to a person at a County Workplace. A Threat or act includes verbal or written communication, menacing, stalking, vandalism, the possession or brandishing of weapons and/or ammunition, unless the specific weapon, ammunition or use is authorized by the County for a particular work assignment, and the use of physical force.
- F. Workplace:** A physical location where the County's work or operations are performed.

III. POLICY

A. Safe and Secure Workplace

1. Employees are entitled to a safe and secure Workplace in conformance with the rules and regulations established by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and all relevant provisions of the Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.).
2. The County has zero tolerance for Threats or acts of Violence in its Workplace.

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3. Threats or acts of Violence must be reported immediately to a supervisor, Security Services or local law enforcement as required by the severity of the Threat or act.
4. Threats or acts of Violence by employees may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal, and/or criminal prosecution.
5. The County does not tolerate deadly weapons in its Workplace as described in [County Policy A2228 Prohibition of Weapons](#).

B. Prevention of Violence

1. It is the responsibility of every employee to work to resolve conflicts promptly to prevent them from escalating to Threats or acts of Violence.
2. Employees are expected to be familiar with and to follow the conflict resolution steps described in [County Policies HR2405 Employee Workplace Concerns](#) and [HR2406 Prohibition Against Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation](#).

C. Response to Workplace Violence When Prevention Fails

The safety of employees is the foremost concern in determining the initial response to a Threat or act of Violence. Each Threat, alleged Threat or act of Violence must be assessed and managed according to the particular circumstances presented. Once a violent or potentially violent situation is identified, if time permits, it must be brought to the attention of the department management for an immediate evaluation of the severity of the situation.

1. Non-Imminent Threat

If a non-imminent Threat is directed at someone in a County Workplace the following timely notifications must be made by the reporting employee, supervisor or Appointing Authority:

- a. Contact Security Services.
- b. Contact the employee's immediate supervisor, if appropriate.
- c. Contact the County's or Department's Human Resources Department.

2. Immediate Danger or Imminent Threat of Violence

Any employee who is a victim of, or a witness to, an act of Violence or an imminent Threat of Violence in the Workplace, or who is advised of an imminent Threat directed at or expressed by other employees and believed by the victim or witness to constitute an imminent danger requiring an immediate response, shall take the following actions:

- a. Seek personal safety.
- b. Warn potential victims.
- c. Call 911. If the telephone requires a 9 to access an outside/public line, press "9-911"; otherwise, press "911". Tell the operator the building's address, floor number and suite number.
- d. Call Security Services.

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- e. If the Threat involves acts requiring evacuation of County facilities, refer to County Policy A1307 *Emergency Evacuation of County Facilities*.

D. Appointing Authority Responsibilities

Appointing Authorities shall:

1. Ensure that their employees have read and understand this policy.
2. Hold their employees accountable for reporting Threats or acts of Violence and fulfilling the responsibilities described in this policy.

E. Manager's and Supervisor's Responsibilities

Managers and Supervisors must:

1. Document that employees understand their responsibilities to report Threats and acts of Violence to their supervisors, Security Services or local law enforcement, as appropriate, regardless of the relationship between the individual who initiated the Threat or act of Violence and the person who was threatened or acted upon.
2. Act immediately and appropriately on all reports of threats or acts of Violence.
3. Take reasonable steps to ensure the Workplace is free from Violence, including appropriate training for responding to Threats in the Workplace.

F. Security Services Responsibilities

If the Manager or Supervisor of an employee affected by Threats or acts of Violence determines that they should contact Security Services or local law enforcement, they need to talk to the on-duty supervisor and provide them with information on what steps have already been taken. The Security Services supervisor will:

1. Coordinate the notification of personnel considered at risk and their leadership.
2. Coordinate any necessary additional security.
3. Notify the County's or Department's Human Resources Department staff who may take additional steps, including considering administrative leave.
4. Refer, as needed, news media contacts to the Appointing Authority and the Office of Communications.

G. Investigation

1. If a crime is believed to have occurred, refer to [County Policy A2213 Reporting of Crime on County Property](#).
2. A report of the incident in question will be made by an on-duty Security Services Officer.
3. All investigations of the incidents referred to in this policy for purposes other than law enforcement should be coordinated with the County's or Department's Human Resources Department, the affected employees' department(s) and Security Services.

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4. The County's or Department's Human Resources Department may conduct an Administrative Investigation which may lead to disciplinary action for the employees responsible, in accordance with [County Policy HR2401 Informal/Formal Discipline](#).
5. All employees contacted as part of the investigative process have a responsibility to fully cooperate and provide information or other assistance that may be needed to ensure that a prompt, complete and fair investigation can be conducted. Refusing to cooperate in the investigation, refusing to answer or answering questions related to the investigation incompletely or untruthfully, or attempting to undermine or discourage an investigation may result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.

IV. COURT ORDERS

- A. If an employee is involved in personal, non-criminal disputes the employee may secure an Order of Protection (A.R.S. § 13-3602), an Injunction against Harassment (A.R.S. § 12-1809) or a similar court order.
 1. Generally, such a court order should include the employee's work location and their place of residence.
 2. When the order is granted the employee must:
 - a. Inform their own management of the order. If the order involves another Maricopa County employee, the employee who obtained the order must inform the management of both employees and provide them with a copy of the order.
 - b. Deliver a copy of the order to the Security Services office located at 301 W. Jefferson.
 - c. Deliver a copy of the order to their Human Resources Department.
- B. Managers and Supervisors of employees involved in the order should take appropriate steps to comply with the order, such as:
 1. Report the order to Security Services.
 2. Provide descriptions and photographs of the individuals who are the subjects of the order.
 3. Alert employees who are likely to come in contact with the subjects of the order.
 4. Provide instructions on actions to be taken if the subjects enter the Workplace.

V. NON-RETALIATION

[County Policy HR2406 Prohibition Against Unlawful Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation](#) forbids any employment-related retaliation against any employee who reports Workplace Violence or suspicion of Workplace Violence. Any person who believes that they have been subject to such retaliation shall bring it to the attention of the Employee Relations Division of the Human Resources Department and Appointing Authority or their designee.

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VI. CONFIDENTIALITY

Consistent with the necessity of preventing Workplace Violence and protecting the privacy rights of the reporting employees, all reports and investigations of Workplace Violence will be kept confidential to the extent practicable under the circumstances. The reports and investigations of Workplace Violence are not generally subject to public disclosure except as may be necessary for disciplinary action or as otherwise required by law.

Revision History

Version	Revision Date	Description of Revision
1	July 1998	Initial version. (Approved by the County Manager)
2	January 11, 2017	Rewrite of existing policy to better clarify roles, responsibilities and ensure actions are operationally relevant and accurate. Revised "Policy Title" to better describe the policy. Changed "Protective Services" to "Security Services." (C-49-17-015-6-00)