

## 4.6 Workplace Violence

*(Amended March 26, 2013)*

### I. OBJECTIVE

The County is committed to protecting employees, volunteers, and members of the public, and minimizing the risk of violence in the workplace. The purpose of this policy is to maintain a workplace that is free from violence and to prevent the potential presence of violence. This policy applies to all County employees and County volunteers.

### II. DIRECTIVES

- A. The County does not permit, tolerate or condone any physical or non-physical acts of violence in the workplace that result in threatened or actual harm to a person or threatened or actual damage to property. Workplace violence includes any threatening words or actions whether verbal or non-verbal, which create in the mind of any reasonable person the belief of receiving immediate or future harm to any person or property.
- B. All employees are responsible for maintaining a safe and secure work environment that is free from the presence of violence by reporting threats or acts of violence in the workplace, refraining from exhibiting behavior or actions that could be interpreted as violent, and fully cooperating in the investigation of threats or acts of violence.
- C. To the extent permitted by law, the County prohibits the possession of weapons on County premises or properties, including housing/carrying a weapon in a private vehicle on County owned or leased property. For the purpose of this policy, "weapon" includes all firearms, ammunition, knives and

cutting utensils, clubs, brass knuckles, explosives or destructive devices, chemical weapons and devices, stun guns, or other objects that may be considered weapons as defined by Section 790.001, Florida Statutes.

The only exceptions to the preceding prohibition on possession of a weapon shall be where the use of a weapon is a necessary and approved requirement of the employee's job or where the individual is specifically authorized to maintain a firearm in a locked personal motor vehicle by Section 790.251, Florida Statutes.

#### D. Reporting

1. Employees have a "duty to warn" their Supervisors, Human Resources Director, Department Directors, County Manager, Deputy County Manager, or County Attorney of any potentially violent situations, or suspicious workplace activities, situations or incidents that they observe or that they are aware of that involve other employees, former employees, customers or visitors. The Human Resources Director, County Manager, and County Attorney shall be notified of all reports under this section unless the report involves the Human Resources Director, County Manager, or County Attorney. To the extent possible, such reports will be handled confidentially.
2. An employee will not be penalized in any way for making a report in good faith under this policy. Employees should not assume the County is aware of any employee violence problems and should immediately bring all complaints and concerns to the County's attention so that they can be appropriately addressed.

**E. Retaliation**

No management personnel, supervisor or other employee shall place an employee at a disadvantage or retaliate against an employee for having reported a workplace violence incident. Employees must report retaliatory actions directly to the Human Resources Director, County Manager, or County Attorney as soon as possible after the incident occurs, then follow up with a written statement. Any retaliation exhibited by or directed toward management, supervisors, or other employees will result in corrective action, up to and including termination.

**F. Corrective Action**

Any employee who is determined, after appropriate investigation, to have committed threatening or violent acts in violation of this policy may be removed from the workplace, and will be subject to corrective action up to and including termination, criminal prosecution, or both.

False accusations regarding acts of workplace violence will not be tolerated, and any person knowingly making a false accusation will be subject to corrective action, up to and including termination.

**G. Maintenance of Records and Documents**

Human Resources shall maintain records and documentation related to this policy including documents related to procedures for hiring, screening, employee code of conduct, training, acknowledgement forms, incident reporting and disciplinary action under the BCC.

*See the following State laws for additional guidelines: Section 790.001, Florida Statutes, Section 790.053, Florida Statutes, Section 790.06, Florida Statutes, and Section 790.251, Florida Statutes.*