



## City of Healdsburg Workplace Violence Policy

Effective Date: March 1, 2023

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jeff Kay, City Manager

### I. INTRODUCTION:

Acts of violence, whether threatened, gestured, or carried out, shall not be tolerated in the workplace. Workplace violence is any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the work site and can occur at any time. It ranges from threats and verbal abuse to physical assaults and even homicide. The City of Healdsburg ("City") is committed to providing a safe work environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence. Anyone witnessing or becoming the subject or victim of violence or threat of violence should follow the procedures in this policy to report such behavior to the proper authorities for investigation.

Minimizing the threat of violence is a duty of all employees to ensure a safe workplace. All employees have a responsibility to notify a supervisor, the Personnel Director, or the City Manager immediately if any violent act or threat against themselves or any other City employee occurs in the workplace or is directly associated with their employment with the City. Retaliation or the threat of retaliation against a person who reports such an incident is prohibited and is grounds for discipline.

### II. POLICY:

Violence or the threat of violence, against or by any employee of the City is unacceptable.

1. Any person on City property who engages in or threatens violent acts may be subject to criminal prosecution.
2. Any employee who engages in or threatens violent acts on the job, whether or not on City property, may be subject to criminal prosecution and/ or disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
3. Retaliation against an employee who initiates a complaint or reports of violence will not be tolerated and is subject to the City's disciplinary procedures.

### **III. TRAINING AND EDUCATION:**

The City shall conduct training on methods and techniques to prevent violence or the threat of violence in the workplace. General training may include: awareness of the City's Workplace Violence Policy; methods for defusing hostile or potentially threatening situations; awareness of basic behavioral indicators that could lead to violent acts; communications procedures for reporting potentially violent situations or individuals; methods for assessing security in the workplace, and awareness of Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Specific training may include: awareness of specific higher risk work activities; personal safety; location and operation of alarm systems; communication procedures for securing assistance from security services, protective services, and medical services; and emergency escape routes.

### **IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

**Employees** are responsible for notifying a supervisor, the Personnel Director, or the City Manager immediately if they are, or believe that any other City employee, may be a potential victim of Workplace Violence. Notification may be made to any of these persons as appropriate and should be as soon as practicable. Reportable conduct includes, the following:

- a. Striking, punching, slapping or assaulting another person.
- b. Fighting or challenging another person to fight.
- c. Grabbing, pinching or touching another person in an unwanted way whether sexually or otherwise.
- d. Engaging in dangerous, threatening or unwanted horseplay.
- e. Possession, use, or threat of use, of a gun, knife or other weapon of any kind on City property, including parking lots, other exterior premises, City vehicles, or while engaged in activities for the City in other locations, unless such possession or use is a requirement of the job.
- f. Threatening harm or any action or conduct that implies the threat of bodily harm.
- g. Threat or actual destruction of City or individual's property, including acts of sabotage.
- h. Engaging in a pattern of unwanted or intrusive behavior against another (e.g., stalking, spying)

City employees shall not possess the following instruments at a City worksite or on City property, including City parking lots, unless there is an authorized work-related purpose:

- a. Firearms
- b. Explosives, explosive devices, fireworks, or ammunition.
- c. Fixed blade knives.
- d. Folding knives with blades over 3.5 inches.
- e. Illegal weapons such as defined in Section 12020 of the California Penal Code.

**The Personnel Director/Human Resources** is responsible for assisting in the prevention of violence in the workplace by providing advice and counsel to managers, supervisors, and employees when faced with real or potential threats or situations that have a potential for violence. The Personnel Director shall assist all City employees in implementing appropriate personnel practices that support and foster the zero-tolerance policy. The Personnel Director shall also assist, as appropriate, in the investigation of threats of violence and address related issues of legitimate concern to employees.

**Supervisors** shall be responsible for implementing and maintaining safe workplace practices, including this policy, and for communicating this policy to subordinates. Supervisors must take all reports of potential violence seriously, investigate promptly, and take appropriate actions to minimize and eliminate the potential for violence in the workplace.

**V. INVESTIGATION:**

The City takes any report of a potentially violent situation or potentially violent individual seriously and conduct a prompt investigation to assess the potential for violence. Investigation shall include:

- a. Review of any previous incidents.
- b. Visit the scene of an incident as soon as possible.
- c. Interview involved employees and witnesses.
- d. Examine the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident, including any previous reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator.
- e. Determine the cause of the incident.
- f. Take corrective action to prevent similar incidents from occurring.
- g. Record the findings and ensure corrective actions are taken.
- h. Obtain any reports completed by law enforcement.

**VI. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

Emergencies are considered those situations where actual violence has occurred or the threat of violence, including the threat of bodily harm or destruction of property, is immediate and requires a police response.

A. Employee Responsibilities:

An employee who is in immediate apparent danger of a violent act, or another employee who witnesses a violent act or the threat of a violent act shall, whenever possible:

- a. Place themselves in a safe location; do not take unnecessary risks in aiding others or confronting violence prone individual(s).
- b. Call 911 and request the immediate response of a police officer. Be prepared to inform the police dispatcher of the circumstances and exact location of where an officer is needed.
- c. Inform a supervisor of the circumstances.
- d. Refer media inquiries to the City Manager's Office.
- e. Cooperate fully in any administrative or criminal investigation that shall be conducted within the policy and the laws.

B. Supervisors:

- a. Place themselves in a safe location; do not take unnecessary risks in aiding others or confronting violence prone individual(s).
- b. Notify staff of immediate danger and to take precautionary measures such as: securing/locking entrances, re-routing office/worksite traffic and other steps which appear appropriate for the circumstances.
- c. Call 911 and request the immediate response of a police officer. Be prepared to inform the police dispatcher of the circumstances and exact location of where an officer is needed.
- d. Notify the Department Head and Personnel Director to coordinate actions and resources in response to incidents of workplace violence.
- e. If feasible, supervisors shall have the involved individuals wait in separate rooms or locations until police take control or remove them from the premises.
- f. If safe, provide responding police personnel with all available information regarding the incident of violence or threat of violence.
- g. Maintain lines of communication on a need-to-know basis among staff to minimize misinformation, panic, and confusion.
- h. Refer media inquiries to the City Manager's Office.

C. Personnel Director/Human Resources

- a. Consult with mental health/EAP resources as appropriate, regarding necessary notifications and the need for onsite mental health intervention. Consideration should be given to critical incident defusing and/or debriefing as indicated for the affected employee(s).

- b. In coordination with the City's media spokesperson, gather information as to what happened, who was involved, who may be affected and begin a process of determining what information may be shared.
- c. Address issues of temporary reassignment, time off, or other appropriate accommodations with the affected workforce as recommended by mental health resources and as requested by the employee(s).

**VII. FUTURE VIOLENCE PROCEDURES:**

Employees who anticipate that they, or another City employee, may be victimized by a violent act, at the workplace or as direct result of their employment with the City, shall inform their supervisor immediately. The supervisor shall inform the Department Head and Personnel Director.

Employees who have a legal restraining order, temporary or permanent, against an individual due to a potential act of violence, who would be in a violation of the order by coming near them at work, shall immediately supply a copy of the signed order to their supervisor and the Personnel Director.

**VIII. NON-EMERGENCY PROCEDURES:**

A. Employees:

Shall inform immediate supervisor or the Personnel Director with details of the incident(s) and any other information relating to the incident.

B. Supervisors:

- a. Immediately contact Department Head with details of incident.
- b. Based on Department Head's direction, conduct a preliminary investigation and document all pertinent information, i.e. time, date, who, when, what transpired, etc. Submit a written report to Department Head within five (5) working days of reported incident with a file copy to the Personnel Director. To the extent possible, information related to the incident will remain confidential.
- c. Prepare final report for submittal to the Personnel Director with specific recommendations on resolution of incident(s) and/or special arrangements made to monitor and report on the situation as circumstances require.

C. Personnel Director/Human Resources:

- a. Advise and consult with Department Head(s) on recommended actions relating to investigation, administrative leave, disciplinary processes, and post-incident counseling.
- b. When appropriate, consult with the Police Department and City Attorney's Office and others in seeking resolution of the matter.
- c. Confer with all parties in developing a course of action to resolve or monitor the incident(s) if appropriate.

D. Healdsburg Police Department:

Shall provide immediate direction, action, and necessary support in ensuring safety of employee(s) in department. Advise management of methods, techniques, or procedures to increase safety.

**IX. CRITICAL POST-INCIDENT FOLLOW UP:**

A. Short term:

- a. Through mental health counselors, offer critical incident debriefing to affected and potentially affected employees within two (2) days of the incident.
- b. Offer an opportunity for follow-up critical incident debriefings for affected employees within one (1) to two (2) weeks of the incident.
- c. Assign a liaison to provide emotional support to victims' families and to assist in City related matters.

B. Long term:

- a. Alert supervisors to be sensitive to employees' grief reactions around anniversaries of pertinent workplace violence incident, such as holidays and court proceedings relating to the incident.
- b. Consider the need for follow-up debriefing.
- c. Establish a liaison to assist victims and their families in obtaining the City's resources and benefits to which they are entitled.
- d. Conduct a post event assessment of the department's response to the incident.

**X. INTENT OF POLICY:**

Under this policy, decisions may be needed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring or a threatening situation from developing. No existing City policy or procedure should be interpreted in a manner that prevents the above from occurring. On the contrary, the City retains complete discretion to act according to the circumstances presented.

This policy does not supersede State or Federal law or departmental policy regarding any action taken by sworn employee while engaging in active law enforcement within the course or scope of the sworn employee's employment.

The City will make the sole determination of whether, and to what extent, the City will act upon threats or acts of violence. In making this determination, the City may undertake a case-by-case analysis in order to ascertain whether there is a reasonable basis to believe that workplace violence has occurred.