




**SAFETY & HEALTH PROCEDURE #22**

**REVISION HISTORY**

Rev	Date	Description
Orig	01 May 2009	Original

Prepared by:   
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Risk Management Division  
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**WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

- REFERENCE: (a) Chapter 296-800-110 WAC, Employer Responsibilities: Safe Workplace  
(b) Chapter 296-247 Part G-1, Means of Egress  
(c) Chapter 296-27, Recordkeeping and Reporting  
(d) Chapter 296-800-210, Lighting  
(e) Workplace Violence WISHA Guide, April, 2000

**I. PURPOSE & SCOPE**

A. Snohomish County is committed to providing a workplace that is free from aggressive, threatening, or violent acts through the development and implementation of a workplace violence prevention policy. This policy and its procedures apply to all worksites owned or controlled by Snohomish County, and all locations where employees are working, including field locations.

**II. GENERAL INFORMATION**

A. Snohomish County is dedicated to employee safety and health and maintains zero tolerance toward workplace violence, or the threat of violence, by any of the County's employees, customers, the general public and/or anyone who conducts business with the County. Individuals who engage in conduct prohibited by this policy may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal

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prosecution, or both. Additionally, an employee found to have violated this policy may be required to participate in a fitness-for-duty evaluation before returning to work. This may include a mandatory referral to the designated Employee Assistance Program and successful completion of any recommended follow-up.

- B. **“Workplace violence”** includes physical acts, direct or indirect threats, and other conduct that occurs in or arises from the workplace that reasonably arouses fear, hostility, or intimidation and causes an individual to fear for his or her personal safety or the safety of his or her family, friends, or property.
- C. **Examples of Prohibited Conduct.** Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:
- Physical acts such as hitting or pushing an individual;
  - Bullying or threatening comments or gestures directed toward an individual, or his or her family or property;
  - Harassing e-mail or telephone calls;
  - Destruction, threat of destruction, or vandalism of property owned, operated, or controlled by the County;
  - Harassing surveillance such as stalking
- D. Department Directors, managers and supervisors will ensure that this safety and health policy and procedures involving workplace violence prevention are clearly communicated and understood by all employees under their direction.
- E. **Weapons possession and prohibited weapons.** Snohomish County employees are prohibited from wearing, transporting or storing firearms or other dangerous weapons within County buildings and facilities, in a County vehicle, or on their person while on County business. “Firearms or other dangerous weapons” include, but are not limited to:
- Any device from which a projectile may be fired by an explosive, such as gunpowder;
  - Any simulated firearm operated by gas or compressed air;
  - Sling shot;
  - Metal knuckles;
  - Spring blade knife

Any employee in possession of a firearm or other dangerous weapon within County buildings or facilities, in a County vehicle, or while otherwise fulfilling job responsibilities will face disciplinary action, criminal prosecution, or both. *Possession of a valid concealed weapon license authorized by the state of Washington is not an exemption under this policy.* This provision *does not* apply to:

- Law enforcement personnel engaged in official duties: or,
- Security personnel engaged in official duties

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- F. An employee who has obtained a civil protection order (including a restraining order, no-contact order, or anti-harassment order) against an abusive partner or harasser shall notify his/her supervisor and the Human Resources Director or Director's designee so that a threat assessment may be conducted. Such information will be kept confidential to the extent possible, and shared only on a need-to-know basis.
- G. Snohomish County prohibits retaliation against any employee who reports a legitimate threat or act of violence and any employee who engages in retaliatory conduct will be subject to discipline. Any acts of retaliation should be reported immediately to the Division Manager, Department Director, and the Human Resources Director.

### **III. INCIDENT RESPONSE AND REPORTING PROCEDURES**

- A. Employees shall report any incident of violent, harassing or threatening behavior promptly to a department director, manager or supervisor. All incidents will be investigated and confidentiality will be maintained to the extent possible. Under no circumstances should employees put themselves at risk of harm in a dangerous situation.

#### **B. Employee Procedure:**

1. If a threat or act of violence poses an immediate threat of harm, immediately withdraw and contact 911, give the dispatcher your name and location along with other information requested. Notify the supervisors and others in the area of imminent threat and evacuate the area if feasible. Follow instructions from emergency officials or supervisor.
2. If a threat of violence does not pose an immediate threat of harm, but you believe it has the potential to do so, report the incident to your supervisor, manager or Human Resources Director or Director's designee.

#### **C. Department Procedure:**

1. Department directors, managers, and supervisors shall take all reasonable steps to protect employees and others from acts of violence in County facilities or while conducting County business.
2. All reported incidents must be initially mitigated by the supervisor and/or department director. If the reported act poses an immediate threat of harm to persons or property and law enforcement has not been notified, call 911.
3. Immediately notify Risk Management (425-388-3726), the Human Resources Department (425-388-3411) and the appropriate department director of any incident involving threats or acts of violence.

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4. Supervisors and managers shall promptly investigate reported incidents of workplace violence and work with Risk Management and the Human Resources Department to determine the appropriate action.
5. The “Supervisor Accident/Incident Investigation Report” form must be submitted to Risk Management within 24 hours of the occurrence of the incident.
6. This procedure applies to all types of violent incidents, whether or not physical injury occurred.

### **D. Risk Assessment**

1. Affected departments should seek assistance in assessing and responding to potential threats. Sources of assistance may include:
  - Snohomish County Sheriff
  - Human Resources Director
  - Risk Manager
  - Applicable department director
2. All investigations will be coordinated by the Human Resource Director or Director’s Designee.

### **E. Training**

1. Training and instruction on preventing workplace violence shall be provided to all managers, supervisors, and employees. This training will also be provided to new employees through the Snohomish County New Employee Orientation.

### **F. Recordkeeping**

1. All Supervisor Accident/Incident Investigation Report Forms shall be kept on file in the Snohomish County Risk Management Division.