



PREVENTING & RESPONDING TO WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Policy: POL-100-40-HR • Effective Date: 8/21/2023 • Res. # 087037
Cancels: Res. # 081598 • Reference: WVPP; PRO-100-40-1-HR

This policy applies to all Whitman County employees while on official county business, on or off county property.

Definitions:

Weapon – An implement or instrument which has the capacity to injure, kill or intimidate others. Weapons may include Blackjack, sling shot, billy club, sand club, sandbag, metal knuckles, dirk, dagger, firearm, knife with a blade longer than three inches, razor with an unguarded blade, metal pipe or bar used or intended to be used as a club, explosives, illnesses (with the intention to infect others) and poisonous or injurious gas.

Workplace – Any location where an employee performs work related duties. This includes but is not limited to vehicles, equipment, buildings, working from home arrangements, parking lots and field locations.

Workplace Violence – Threats and/or acts of violence against an employee, client, or visitor. Includes threats to inflict physical harm, damages to property, or any purposeful or knowing behavior that would cause a reasonable person to feel threatened with physical harm committed by an employee or non-employee in the workplace. Does not include reasonable force in the defense of oneself or others and actions taken by public safety personnel and County employees while performing their duties as they are trained and required to do.

WVPP – Workplace Violence Prevention Program

1. Whitman County Will Not Tolerate Violence in the Workplace

Whitman County is concerned and committed to employee safety and health. The County does not tolerate any type of workplace violence committed by or against County employees, clients, or visitors. It will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring by implementing a WVPP.

2. Whitman County will Provide Authority and Resources

Whitman County will make every reasonable effort to provide adequate authority and budgetary resources to responsible parties so its goals and standards are met. The program will be annually reviewed and updated as needed by the Whitman County Incident Team.

3. Supervisors and Employees Implement and Maintain the WVPP

Whitman County encourages employee participation in designing and implementing the WVPP. Supervisors and managers are responsible for ensuring all safety and health policies and procedures involving security are clearly communicated and understood by all employees, all incidents and hazards are accurately and promptly reported, and all rules are enforced fairly and uniformly.

4. Whitman County Prohibits the Making of Threats or Violent Actions

Threats, threatening conduct, or any other acts of aggression or violence in the workplace will not be tolerated. Any employee determined to have committed such acts will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Non-employees engaged in violent acts on County premises will be reported to the proper authorities and fully prosecuted. This list of behaviors, while not comprehensive, provides examples of conduct that is prohibited.

- Causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks
- Aggressive or hostile behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury to another person
- Intentionally damaging County or another employee's property
- Possession of a weapon while on County property or while on County business. Exceptions:
 - (1) Commissioned Law Enforcement
 - (2) Juvenile Services Staff (Chemical Spray) as approved by the Department Head
 - (3) Park Rangers (Multi-purpose tool)
 - (4) Facilities Maintenance (Multi-purpose tool)
 - (5) Road and Solid Waste Staff (Multi-purpose tool)
- Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence

5. All Employees Must Follow Safe Work Practices

All employees will have training and instruction by their supervisor on general and job-specific workplace security practices. Each employee is responsible for using safe work practices, following all directives, policies and procedures, and assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment. All employees will adhere to work practices that are designed to make the workplace more secure, and will not engage in verbal threats or physical actions that create a security hazard for others in the workplace.

6. Employees Must Immediately Report Violent or Potentially Dangerous Situations

The County requires prompt and accurate reporting of all violent incidents, whether or not physical injury has occurred, by using the Violent Act/Threat Reporting Form available from all supervisors or Human Resources. The County will not discriminate against victims of workplace violence.

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a supervisor or the HR Department. All reported incidents will be investigated. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others only on a need-to-know basis. All parties involved in a situation will be contacted and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. The County will actively intervene at any indication of a possibly hostile or violent situation.