

TOWN OF WEBSTER WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

PURPOSE:

The Town of Webster maintains a zero tolerance standard of violence in the workplace. The purpose of this policy is to provide Webster employees, volunteers and the public guidance that will maintain an environment that is free of violence and the threat of violence on Town property and at Town sponsored events.

POLICY:

Violent behavior of any kind or threats of violence, either implied or direct, are prohibited in Webster facilities and at Town sponsored events. Such conduct by a Town employee will not be tolerated. An employee who exhibits violent behavior may be subject to criminal prosecution and shall be subject to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Violent threats or actions by a non-employee may result in criminal prosecution. The Town of Webster will investigate all complaints filed and will also investigate any possible violation of this policy of which the Town is made aware. Retaliation against a person who makes a complaint regarding violent behavior or threats of violence made to him/her is also prohibited.

DEFINITIONS:

Workplace Violence: Behavior in which an employee, former employee, volunteer or visitor to a Town facility inflicts or threatens to inflict damage to property or serious harm, injury or death to others at the workplace.

Threat: The implication or expression of intent to inflict physical harm or actions that a reasonable person would interpret as a threat to physical safety or property.

Intimidation: Making others afraid or fearful through threatening behavior.

Zero-Tolerance: A standard that establishes that any behavior, implied or actual, that violates this policy will not be tolerated.

Court Order: An order by a court that specifies and/or restricts the behavior of an individual. Court orders may be issued in matters involving domestic violence, stalking or harassment or protective orders including Temporary Restraining Orders.

PROHIBITED BEHAVIOR:

Violence in the workplace may include but it is not limited to the following list of prohibited behaviors directed at or by a coworker, supervisor or member of the public:

1. Direct threats or physical intimidation.
2. Implications or suggestions of violence.
3. Stalking.
4. Assault of any form.
5. Physical restraint, confinement.

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6. Dangerous or threatening horseplay.
7. Loud, disruptive or angry behavior or language that is clearly not part of the typical work environment.
8. Blatant or intentional disregard for the safety or well-being of others.
9. Commission of a violent felony or misdemeanor on Town property.
10. Any other act that a reasonable person would perceive as constituting a threat of violence.

Domestic violence, while often originating in the home, can significantly impact workplace safety and the productivity of victims as well as coworkers. For the purpose of this policy, “domestic violence” is defined as abuse committed against an adult or fully emancipated minor. Abuse is the intentional reckless attempt to cause bodily injury, sexual assault, threatening behavior, harassment, stalking or making annoying phone calls to a person who is in any of the following relationships:

1. Spouse or former spouse.
2. Domestic partner or former domestic partner.
3. Cohabitant or former cohabitant and other household members.
4. A person with whom the victim is having, or has had, a dating or engagement relationship.
5. A person with whom the victim has a child.

The Town of Webster recognizes that domestic violence may occur in relationships regardless of the marital status, age, race or sexual orientation of the parties.

REPORTING ACTS OR THREATS OF VIOLENCE:

An employee who

- is the victim of violence, or
- believes they have been threatened with violence, or
- witnesses an act or threat of violence towards anyone else shall take the following steps:

1. If an emergency exists and the situation is one of immediate danger, the employee shall contact local police officials by using panic button (if applicable) or dialing 911 and may take whatever emergency steps are available and appropriate to protect himself/herself from immediate harm such as leaving the area.
2. If the situation is not one of immediate danger, the employee shall report the incident to the appropriate supervisor or manager as soon as possible and complete the Workplace Violence Incident Report Form.

PROCEDURES-FUTURE VIOLENCE:

Employees who have reason to believe that they or others may be victimized by a violent act sometime in the future at the workplace or as a direct result of their activities in Town shall inform their supervisor or officials by immediately completing a Workplace Violence Incident Report Form so appropriate action may be taken. The official shall inform the Select Board and local law enforcement.

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Employees who have signed and filed a restraining order, temporary or permanent, against an individual due to a potential act of violence who would be in violation of the order by coming near them shall immediately supply a copy of the signed order to the Select Board. The Select Board shall provide copies to the appropriate department and local police.

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION:

Acts of violence or threats will be investigated immediately in order to protect employees and volunteers from danger, unnecessary anxiety concerning their welfare and loss of productivity. The department official will cause to be initiated an investigation into the potential violation of work rules/policies. Simultaneously, the department official will refer the matter to local police for their review of the potential violation of civil and/or criminal law.

Procedures for investigating incidents of workplace violence include:

1. Visiting the scene of the incident as soon as possible.
2. Interviewing injured and threatened employees, volunteers and witnesses.
3. Examining the workplace for security risk factors associated with the incident including any reports of inappropriate behavior by the perpetrator.
4. Determining the cause of the incident.
5. Taking mitigating action to prevent the incident from recurring and recording the findings and mitigating actions taken.

In appropriate circumstances, the Town of Webster will inform the reporting individual of the results of the investigation. To the extent possible, the Town of Webster will maintain the confidentiality of the reporting employee in the investigation but may need to disclose results in appropriate circumstances; for example, in order to protect individual safety. The Town of Webster will not tolerate retaliation against any employee or volunteer who reports workplace violence.

MITIGATING MEASURES:

Incidents which threaten the security of employees shall be mitigated as soon as possible following their discovery. Mitigating actions include:

1. Notification of law enforcement authorities when a potential criminal act has occurred.
2. Provision of emergency medical care in the event of any violent act upon an employee.
3. Post event trauma counseling for those employees desiring such assistance.
4. Assurance that incidents are handled in accordance with the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.
5. Requesting that the Town Counsel file a restraining order as appropriate.

TRAINING AND INSTRUCTION:

The Webster Select Board shall be responsible for ensuring that all employees, including supervisors, are provided training and instruction on general workplace security practices. Departments shall be responsible for ensuring that all employees are provided training and instructions on job specific workplace security practices.

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Training and instruction shall be provided as follows:

1. To all current employees and volunteers when the policy is first implemented.
2. To all newly hired employees, elected officials, volunteers and employees given new job assignments for which specific workplace security training has not previously been provided.
4. To affected employees and volunteers whenever management is made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.

Workplace security training and instruction includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Preventative measures to reduce that threat of workplace violence, including procedures for reporting workplace security hazards.
2. Methods to diffuse hostile or threatening situations.
3. Escape routes.
4. Explanation of the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.

In addition, specific instructions shall be provided to all employees regarding workplace security hazards unique to their job assignment.

Adopted, May 9, 2016

Webster Select Board:



Bruce G. Johnson, Chairman



Mike P. Borek



Nanci A. Schofield

TOWN OF WEBSTER WORKPLACE INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

Date Reported: _____

Name of person making report: _____

Telephone Number: _____

If anonymous, indicate method of notification:

- ☐ Telephone Call
- ☐ Written Documentation
- ☐ Other, specify _____

Name/Location of affected department: _____

Name of alleged Threat Maker/Perpetrator: _____

Relationship to the person reporting:

- ☐ Employee
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ Town Citizen
- ☐ Vendor
- ☐ Contractor

Relationship to Victim/Potential Victim (if any): _____

Name of Victim/Potential Victim: _____

Additional information or documents may be attached if necessary

When (date) and where (physical location) did alleged threat or act of violence occur?

What events occurred immediately prior to the incident?

What was the specific language of the alleged threat?

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Provide specific details of the alleged threat or act of violence:

Describe the conduct or appearance of the Threat Maker/Perpetrator (physically or emotionally):

Name of Witnesses:

Telephone Numbers:

1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____

What happened to the Threat Maker/Perpetrator after the incident?

Names of supervisory staff involved and how they responded:

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Steps that have been taken to ensure the threat will not be carried out or act of violence repeated:

Was law Enforcement notified?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, what action was taken by Law Enforcement?

- ☐ No action taken
- ☐ Report Written
- ☐ Suspect escorted from property
- ☐ Suspect arrested
- ☐ Other, specify_____

Name of local Law Enforcement Agency:_____

Suggestions for preventing a similar incident in the future:

Report Prepared by:_____

Date:_____

Job Title:_____

Telephone Number:_____