

## **Macon County Workplace Violence Policy**

### **I. POLICY:**

Macon County is committed to providing, in so far as it reasonably can do so within available resources, a safe environment for working and conducting business. The County will not tolerate acts of violence committed by or against County employees, or members of the public, while on Macon County property or while performing County business at other locations.

The word violence in this policy shall mean an act or behavior that:

- \* is physically assaultive;
- \* a reasonable person would perceive as obsessively directed, e.g.
- \* intensively focused on a grudge, grievance, or romantic interest in another person, and reasonably likely to result in harm or threats of harm to persons or property;
- \* consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to harm another individual or in any way endanger the safety of an individual;
- \* would be interpreted by a reasonable person as carrying potential for physical harm to the individual
- \* is a behavior, or action, that a reasonable person would perceive as menacing;
- \* involves carrying or displaying weapons, destroying property, or throwing objects in a manner reasonably perceived to be threatening;
- \* or consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to destroy property.

Violent actions on County property or facilities, or while on County business, will not be tolerated or ignored. Any unlawful violent actions committed by employees or members of the public while on County property, or while using County facilities, will be prosecuted as appropriate. The County intends to use reasonable legal, managerial, administrative, and disciplinary procedures to secure the workplace from violence and to reasonably protect employees and members of the public.

**NOTE: This is a zero-tolerance policy, meaning that Macon County disciplines or terminates every employee found to have violated this policy.**

### **II. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to achieve the following:

- A. reduce the potential for violence in and around the workplace;
- B. encourage and foster a work environment that is characterized by respect and healthy conflict resolution; and
- C. mitigate the negative consequences for employees who experience or encounter violence in their work lives.

### **III. RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **A. Employees**

All employees are responsible for:

- \* refraining from acts of violence and for seeking assistance to resolve personal issues that may lead to acts of violence in the workplace; and
- \* reporting to managers and supervisors any dangerous or threatening situations that occur in the workplace.

Employees are encouraged to report to their managers/supervisors situations that occur outside of the workplace which may affect workplace safety, i.e., instances where protection orders have been issued, etc.

#### **B. Managers/Supervisors**

Managers and supervisors are responsible for assessing situations, communicating with the Threat Assessment Team, and then responding to reports of or knowledge of violence and for initiating the investigation process.

Any report of violence, will be evaluated immediately and confidentially, and appropriate action will be taken, where possible, in order to protect the employee from further violence. Appropriate disciplinary action will be taken when it is determined that Macon County employees have committed acts of violence.

Where issues of employee safety are of concern, managers and supervisors should evaluate the workplace and make appropriate recommendations regarding a reasonable response.

#### **C. The County Manager**

In so far as is reasonably possible, the County Manager or his designee, is responsible for developing procedures that are designed to reasonably achieve:

- \* prompt and appropriate response to any act of violence;
- \* accountability among employees for acts of violence committed in the workplace;
- \* establishment of oversight of investigations of violence;
- \* establishment of a Threat Assessment Team to provide immediate response to serious incidents;
- \* establishment of avenues of support for employees who experience violence; and
- \* communication of this policy and administrative procedures to employees, managers and supervisors.

### **IV ORGANIZATION/ADMINISTRATION**

#### **A. Prohibited Conduct**

Prohibited conduct includes, but is not limited to:

- \* Injuring another person physically;
- \* Engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person
- \* Engaging in behavior that subjects another individual to extreme emotional distress;
- \* Possessing, brandishing, or using a weapon while on County premises or engaged in County business;
- \* Damaging property intentionally;
- \* Threatening to injure an individual or damage property; and
- \* Committing injurious acts motivated by, or related to, domestic violence or sexual harassment.

## B. Identifying and Responding to Risks

Macon County identifies and responds to workplace violence hazards as follows:

- \* Threat Assessment Team

The Human Resources Director appoints a threat assessment team to assess Macon County's vulnerability to violence and determine the appropriate preventative measures. The team:

- \* Reviews the workplace to identify existing or potential violence hazards. The worksite review should include, but not be limited to, inspected security measures, analyzing records of violent incidents and monitoring trends, and conducting screening surveys to learn about employees' security concerns. The Human Resource Department maintains records of all threats and incidents of violence committed against employees. Access to such records is on a need-to-know basis only.
- \* Provides guidance concerning liaison with outside agencies, collecting and preserving evidence, and interviews with involved parties;
- \* Manages communications regarding violent incidents including media relations, internal communications, and communications with the families of victims.
- \* Coordinates decisions concerning clean-up, repairs, changes in operations, return-to-work, trauma care, etc.
- \* Evaluates security after a threat is made to assess the potential for violence and to determine if additional security measures are necessary.
- \* Develops a training program for employees and managers concerning how to recognize potentially violent situations and how to prepare for such incidents.

The Threat Assessment Team will consist of:

Mike Decker	Director Human Resources/Clerk to the Board	2020
Warren Cabe	EMS Director	2558
Jimmy Teem	Fire Marshal	2068
Kathy McGaha	Health Director	2420
John Brent Holbrooks	Sheriff	2191
Tony Carver	Sheriff Detective-Training Officer	2109
Page McCurry	Social Services	2531
Mike Cope	Building & Grounds Superintendent	2556

### Security planning for at-risk employees

Some employees are known to be at risk for violence because of the nature of their jobs. Other employees can be at risk because they are subject to violence, threats, or harassment from a current or former spouse or partner or other non-employee. The Threat Assessment Team will work with at-risk employees and their supervisors to develop safety plans that address the specific risks the employee's face while at work.

- \* Pre-hire screening

Managers and supervisors must take reasonable steps to review job candidates' backgrounds to determine if they have a history of committing violent acts or making threats. Pre-hire screening generally consists of reference checks with prior employers, DMV records, and criminal background checks.

### C. Guidelines for Handling Violent Situations

The Human Resource Department maintains and distributes to all employees detailed guidelines and procedures for handling workplace violence and threats. The Threat Assessment Team is responsible for periodically reviewing the guidelines to ensure that they are adequate and up-to-date. If a violent incident occurs, the Threat Assessment Team must re-evaluate the guidelines and procedures and modify them accordingly.

### D. Support for Victims of Violence

Victims of violent incidents in the workplace might have to contend with a variety of medical, psychological, and legal consequences. Macon County accommodates victims of workplace violence by:

Referring victims to appropriate community resources, such as Medical centers, employee assistance programs, counseling services, victim advocacy groups, legal aid, and domestic violence shelters;

\* Cooperating with law enforcement personnel in the investigation of the crime and the prosecution of the offender.

\* Providing a debriefing for employees 24 to 48 hours after a serious violent occurrence to explain what happened and what steps are being taken by Macon County to support affected employees.

### E. Enforcement

The Threat Assessment Team must immediately investigate any reported violence, harassment, or threats committed on Macon County Center premises.

All employees who commit violent acts or who otherwise violate this policy are subject to corrective action or discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

Macon County will seek the prosecution of all of those who engage in violence on its premises or against its employees while they are engaged in Macon County business

### F. Policy Support Documents

This section includes the following policy support documents:

#### **\* Workplace Violence: Employee Guidelines and Procedures**

-These guidelines inform employees about practical ways to protect themselves in violent situations. These guidelines are based on guidelines the Federal Protective Service provides to some federal government offices.

#### **\* Violence Prevention Checklist**

-This is a checklist that Macon County will use to assess its vulnerability to workplace violence and determine appropriate preventative measures. This checklist is based on a checklist the Federal Protective Service provides to some federal government offices.

## **Workplace Violence: Employee Guidelines and Procedures**

While we endeavor to provide our employees with a safe and secure workplace, Macon County recognizes that crime and violence sometimes can spill over into the workplace. We are providing you with these guidelines so you can be better prepared to handle violent and threatening situations.

This document summarizes actions you should and should not take to deal with threatening or violent situations. Taking a few moments to familiarize yourself with these guidelines is an important part of being prepared for workplace emergencies.

### **General Security Practices**

\* Never hesitate to call law enforcement or Security if confronted with a potentially violent situation. It is better to have called law enforcement personnel unnecessarily than not to have the police available when a threatening situation turns violent.

\* Never attempt to physically restrain or physically remove a threatening or violent individual by yourself. Doing so puts you in danger and leaves you and Macon County vulnerable to possible lawsuits.

\* Always report violent, threatening, or harassing behavior to your supervisor and Security. Alert your supervisor or Security to the presence of strangers in your work area or the presence of any suspicious packages.

\* In the event of armed robbery, comply with the robber's demands, including demands for Macon County money or property.

### **Coping With Threatening or Violent Individuals**

Effective handling of threatening or violent individuals requires you to use good judgement and common sense and rely on your own assessment of the particular situation. In almost all cases, try to remove yourself physically from the situation. Nevertheless, you might be able to resolve or cope with many types of threatening or violent situations by following the guidelines below.

When confronted with an angry or hostile individual:

1. Stay calm.
2. Listen attentively.
3. Maintain eye contact.
4. Be courteous and patient, but try to keep the situation under control by expressing a willingness to sit and calmly discuss the matter with the individual.

When confronted with a person shouting, swearing, threatening violence, or engaging in bizarre or dangerous behavior.

1. Stay calm.
2. Be courteous and patient, but maintain your distance from the individual.
3. Signal a co-worker or supervisor that you need help. Do not call for help yourself if you are being directly confronted by the individual.
4. Have the co-worker or supervisor call the supervisor call security or the local law enforcement.

When confronted by someone with a gun, knife, or other weapon:

1. Stay calm.
2. Never try to grab the weapon.
3. Quietly signal a co-worker or supervisor that you need help. Do not call for help yourself if you are being directly confronted by the individual.
4. Have the co-worker or supervisor call the security or local law enforcement.
5. Be courteous and patient. Keep talking, but follow the instructions from the person who has the weapon. Stall for time, but do not risk harm to yourself or others.
6. Watch for a safe chance to escape to a safe area. Take direction from the law enforcement personnel or Security personnel once they arrive on the scene.

**Violence Prevention Checklist:  
Physical Security Features**

- \* Check, and improve as necessary, the lighting in work areas, hallways, stairwells, parking lots and garages.
- \* Identify and remove obstructions or hiding places.
- \* Where appropriate, lock entryways and install a doorbell for visitors.
- \* Install security systems as appropriate
- \* Station security guards near entrances and exits.
- \* Layout the facility so that the employee work area is isolated from public access areas by walls or locked doors.
- \* Position desks so that employees face doors from which members of the public can enter.

**Work Practices and Security Procedures**

- \* Require employees to report any suspicious activities or unauthorized persons on the premises as well as all threatening or violent incidents.
- \* Require employees to carry ID badges as appropriate.
- \* Provide employees leaving work late with escorts to their cars; when needed or requested.
- \* If possible, have employees work in teams. There is safety in numbers.
- \* Empty trash cans often.
- \* Report suspicious packages or unattended bags or boxes. Keep offices orderly so that suspicious packages are noticed more readily.
- \* Keep closets, service entries, and telephone and electrical closets locked.
- \* Discourage employees from working solitary late nights on a regular basis.
- \* Keep master keys and key cards in a secure, locked place.
- \* Elicit evaluations of security precautions and suggestions for improvement from employees.

## **Emergency Preparedness**

- \* Test current security measures and determine if they will protect employees if an emergency arises.
- \* Determine how quickly police officers and firefighters can respond to a call for help.
- \* Distribute guidelines to employees on preventing and handling violent and threatening situations.

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