

**USACE FINANCE CENTER INTERNAL POLICY GUIDE: UFC-116****SUBJECT: Violence in the Workplace**

1. **Purpose**. The purpose of this guide is to outline the policy for promoting a work environment that is free from violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. This guide applies to all employees assigned to the UFC.
2. **Policy**.
  - a. Violence, threats, harassment, intimidation and other disruptive behavior in our workplace will not be tolerated. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm.
  - b. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action, criminal penalties, or both.
  - c. All reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.
  - d. Employees should report violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior to their supervisors.
  - e. Threats or assaults requiring immediate attention should be reported to the guard first and then to the supervisor.
  - f. Supervisors who receive reports of violence in the workplace will respond immediately. If required, the supervisor will seek the advice of the HR Liaison and the Security Officer to determine the appropriate action.
3. **Threat Management Team (TMT)**. A team will be designated by appointment to assess potentially violent behavior and to assist the Director in managing threats. This team will be chaired by the Security Officer and will senior official include representatives from Human Resources, Facilities Maintenance, EEO, and Accounting Operations. The mission of the TMT will include assessing threatening situations, developing strategies and executing plans to identify situations and conditions in the workplace conducive to violence and resolving/correcting and/or eliminating them to reduce the possibility of violence. The TMT will ensure supervisors and

employees receive appropriate training and will investigate and assess all incidents of harassment, threats, or act of violence.

#### 4. **Avoiding Workplace Violence.**

- a. **Pre-employment Checks:** The Human Resources Liaison will coordinate with the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) to ensure pre-employment screening (such as records checks) has been completed with satisfactory results. Supervisors are responsible for conducting reference checks by contacting the prospective employee's current and/or former supervisors. These reference checks should not only focus on the technical abilities of the prospective employee, but also on their work relationships, problem solving abilities and the prospective employee's ability to work under stressful situations or sub-optimum conditions.
- b. **Open Communications:** It is critical that open lines of communication between employees and supervisors be developed and maintained. Leaders, supervisors, and managers play a critical role in reducing the risk of violence/unacceptable behavior through open communications. Employees must be able to air concerns, problems and grievances and to report threats, coercion, intimidation or potential violent activity to/through the supervisory chain. Employees must also feel comfortable that the supervisory chain will be open and receptive to such "upward" communication.
- c. **Employee Support Services:** A variety of resources are available to assist employees in dealing with problems originating in or being brought to the workplace. Employees should begin the process by contacting their supervisor, the Human Resources Liaison, the CPAC, or the Employee Assistance Program Representative.
- d. **Appropriate Action:** Problems must be handled at the lowest level. The objective is to resolve problems before they escalate.

#### 5. **Handling Problem Behavior.**

- a. The supervisor is responsible for formulating the best course of action and the time for implementation as it relates to a violent employee. The supervisor may seek advice from the TMT. As requested, the TMT will provide advice and recommendations as to counseling and problem resolution for both the victim and the attacker to prevent further conflicts. All actions should be directed at ensuring a healthy and productive work environment.

- b. Corrective disciplinary action will be considered when there has been an incident of disruptive or violent behavior. The message will be communicated to the alleged attacker and other employees that such behavior will not be tolerated; and that safety of all employees is critical to the organization.
  - c. Employees who engage in violent or disruptive behavior may be denied access to the building. This determination will be made by the Director. When this determination is made, all access devices: badges, keys, passwords, etc. will be returned to the organization or rendered ineffective. If the behavior is criminal, investigations by other law enforcement agencies will be conducted and prosecution may result.
6. **Awareness Training**. Violence in the workplace awareness training for employees will be conducted on an annual basis. Additionally, the following guidance will be published regularly for all employees:
- a. **How to React to Harassing/Abusive Calls:**
    - Hang up at once!. Wait at least 20 seconds before placing a call. This allows the telephone company's equipment to disconnect the caller even if the caller does not hang up.
    - Never give any information such as your name and address, to unknown callers.
    - If calls continue, talk to your supervisor about the problem.
    - Together, you and your supervisor will decide on the appropriate action to include changing your phone number or adding caller ID services to your phone.
    - When the identity of the caller is known, the Security Officer will pursue legal action.
  - b. **How to React to Bomb Threats:**
    - Keep calm.
    - Keep the caller on the line as long as possible to gather information on voice characteristics, nature of the problem, familiarity with the facility, people mentioned, etc.
    - Write down every word of the threat.
    - Ask for the location of the bomb and what time it is set to go off.
    - Be alert to the caller's voice and all background noises you hear from the caller's end of the line.
    - Report the call immediately to your supervisor.
  - c. **Tips for Staying Safe at Work:**
    - Keep the phone number of the security guard (4-8403) near the phone in your work area.
    - Develop a "danger signal" for use with coworkers.

- Promptly notify your supervisor of potentially violent situations.
- Stay away from potentially violent coworkers.
- Know where the nearest exit is.
- Conduct emergency drills with your coworkers.

**d. Tips for Staying Safe When Working at Night:**

- Inform the guard that you will be working late.
- Park in a well lit area as near to the work entrance as possible.
- If possible, ask the guard or a coworker to walk with you to your car.
- Have your keys ready as you leave the building.
- Before entering your car, check the back seat and floorboard.
- Lock your car as soon as you are seated, before you fasten your seatbelt.

**e. How to Reduce Your Risk of Attack if Threatened at Work:**

- Don't panic. Think and size up the situation.
- Call the guard (4-8403) if there is time.
- Use a prearranged "danger signal" with coworkers.
- Try to remain in control of the situation. Keep direct eye contact with the possible attacker.
- If you get a chance to run, do so.
- Report the incident to your supervisor immediately.
- If you know someone is coming to attack you, notify the guard to prevent entry into your work area. Tell your supervisor.

**f. How to React if You Are Taken Hostage:**

- Remain calm.
- Speak clearly.
- Don't raise your voice.
- Avoid arguing.
- Be compliant, but don't commit crimes if requested.
- Follow the instructions of the negotiators once they arrive on the scene.

**g. How to React if You Are Being Stalked:**

- Contact the HR Liaison if the aggressor works for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Contact law enforcement to file a complaint.
- Consider a restraining order.
- Inform the guard and provide him with a description and/or a photograph.
- Consider purchasing a cellular phone.
- Inform your supervisor, and if applicable discuss acquiring caller ID services for your phone line.

- Discuss with your supervisor altering your work schedule.
- Periodically, alter your route to and from work and your time of arrival and departure.
- Always let someone know where you are going and when to expect you.

7. **Changes.** This policy letter will be maintained on the UFC LAN. Changes will be made as needed to maintain current policy. POC for this policy guide is the undersigned.

FOR THE DIRECTOR:

Encl  
Director's EEO/Harassment Policy

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