

POLICY 707 WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

1. **Purpose.** To provide a preventative plan to address violent or aggressive behavior in the workplace and to establish procedures to respond to acts of violence by or against County employees.
2. **Scope.**
 - 2.1 This policy applies to all regular full-time, regular part-time, , seasonal employees, and temporary employees of Eau Claire County.
3. **Definitions.**
 - 3.1 County Employee refers to all regular full-time, regular part-time, seasonal employees, temporary employees, volunteers, and elected and appointed officials of Eau Claire County.
 - 3.2 Workplace means all County-owned or leased property, including vehicles and mobile equipment, and any other property where County employees are performing work in an official capacity for the County.
 - 3.3 Workplace Violence includes, but is not limited to: murder, assaults or battery (intentional offensive touching or application of force or violence to another), any acts of written, verbal, or physical violence against County employees, stalking (willfully, maliciously and repeatedly following or harassing another person) while either the stalker or victim is on the job, at their place of employment or while performing the duties of their job.
 - 3.4 Weapon means a handgun, an electric weapon, as defined in Wis. Stat. § 941.295 (1c) (a), a knife other than a switchblade knife under Wis. Stat. § 941.24, or a billy club.
4. **Policy.**
 - 4.1 Eau Claire County is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its employees, visitors, and customers. All violent acts or aggressive behavior of any type will not be tolerated by or against County employees, visitors, and customers. All employees will notify their supervisor of any workplace violence which they have witnessed, experienced, become aware of or in any way have knowledge of. The County will investigate allegations of any violent or intimidating behaviors, gestures, or acts in the workplace.

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- 4.2 Eau Claire County adheres to the following guidelines to deal with intimidation, harassment, or other threats of (or actual) violence that may occur during business hours or on its premises.
 - 4.3 All employees, including supervisors and temporary employees, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees are expected to refrain from fighting, "horseplay," or other conduct that may be dangerous to others. Firearms, weapons, and other dangerous or hazardous devices or substances are prohibited from the premises of Eau Claire County without proper authorization.
 - 4.4 With the exception of authorized employees of the Eau Claire County Sheriff's Office, no employee of Eau Claire County will possess firearms, whether licensed or not, or any other weapon while on premises or property owned or leased by Eau Claire County, in County vehicles, or while otherwise conducting County business. This weapons ban does not apply to weapons legally possessed by an employee, who is licensed by the State under Wis. Stat. § 175.60, stored in the employee's private vehicle. Employees in violation of the weapons ban are subject to disciplinary action.
 - 4.5 Conduct that threatens, intimidates, or coerces another employee, a customer, or a member of the public at any time, including off-duty periods, will not be tolerated. This prohibition includes all acts of harassment, including harassment that is based on an individual's sex, race, age, or any characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law.
5. Reporting Procedures.
- 5.1 All threats of (or actual) violence, both direct and indirect, should be reported as soon as possible to the employee's immediate supervisor or any other member of management. This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by customers, vendors, solicitors, or other members of the public. When reporting a threat of violence, employees should be as specific and detailed as possible.
 - 5.2 All suspicious individuals or activities should also be reported as soon as possible to a supervisor. Employees should not place themselves in dangerous situations. If there is a nearby commotion or disturbance, employees should not try to intercede or see what is happening.
 - 5.3 Report to Human Resources. Supervisors receiving employee reports of workplace violence or that have knowledge of information of an internal or non-emergency nature which may affect the security of the County and its assets will report such incidents to Human Resources.

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- 5.4 Although every effort will be made to keep reports and records that are made and kept pursuant to this policy confidential, the reports and records may be subject to public disclosure under Wisconsin's Public Records Law.
 - 5.4.1 For those cases where it appears that criminal activity may be involved, department heads and supervisors should not take any action that would jeopardize the outcome of any investigation. Do not change anything at the scene of a violent incident until properly documented by those in authority.
- 5.5 False Reports. Allegations and/or reports of workplace threats will be taken seriously. Employees intentionally making false reports will be subject to discipline up to and including termination.
- 5.6 Investigations and Resolutions. Eau Claire County will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of (or actual) violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as is practical. In order to maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the County may suspend employees, either with or without pay, pending the outcome of the investigation.
 - 5.6.1 Privacy rights will be observed in the event of the need to investigate workplace violence incidents. Only those individuals with a clear need to know of the potential risk will be notified in cases where a person is perceived to be a threat to others. Those investigating and resolving the complaint will maintain anonymity of employees reporting violence or threats of violence during the investigation to the greatest extent possible. However there is no right to or guarantee of anonymity since it is often necessary to make the employee or customer against whom the allegation has been made aware of the complaint in order to ascertain the facts.
- 6. Consequences of Policy Violation.
 - 6.1 Anyone determined to be responsible for threats of (or actual) violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment and may also result in criminal prosecution.

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- 6.2 Eau Claire County encourages employees to bring their disputes or differences with other employees to the attention of their supervisors or Human Resources before the situation escalates into potential violence. Eau Claire County is prepared to assist in the resolution of employee disputes, and will not discipline employees for raising such concerns.
- 6.3 Retaliation against an employee who genuinely reports threats of workplace violence in good faith is in violation of this policy. Anyone who engages in or assists in such retaliatory actions will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment.

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