

Medium Sized Solano Logo

# WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

**Statement, Prevention, and Response**

*In compliance with California Code of Regulations, Title 8*

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# VIOLENCE FREE STATEMENT

# VIOLENCE FREE STATEMENT

The Solano Community College District is committed to creating and maintaining an environment for all members of this educational community that is free from violence.

Civility, understanding, and mutual respect toward all members of the college community are intrinsic to excellence in teaching and learning, to safety in the workplace, and to the maintenance of a culture and environment that serves the needs of all.

The Solano Community College District will not tolerate violence or threats of violence on college properties or at college sponsored events.

For the purpose of this statement, violence or threats include, but are not limited to:

- 1) any act that is physically assaultive
- 2) any threat, behavior, or action which is interpreted by a reasonable person to carry the potential to:
  - a) harm or endanger the safety of others
  - b) result in an act of aggression
  - c) destroy or damage property

Any member of this educational community who commits a violent act or threatens to commit a violent act shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from employment or student expulsion. This is exclusive of any criminal and/or civil processes that may be pursued.

It is the responsibility of every member of this educational community to take any threat or violent act seriously, and to report these matters to the appropriate authorities.

# RESPONSE



# WARNING SIGNS

## RECOGNITION

The risk of workplace violence can be minimized by careful observation of behavior. Specific stress factors, behaviors, and personality traits have been associated, after the fact, with almost every incident of workplace violence. The presence of several of these indicators greatly increases the likelihood of violent actions. Most people will not just “snap.” An escalating series of clues usually precedes an act of workplace violence. The risk of a violent outburst is greatly increased when combinations of the following warning signs are ignored:

### WARNING SIGNS

**Boundary Crossing:** includes pushing the limits of acceptable workplace behavior and continual testing of established rules.

**Chemical Dependence:** upon alcohol and/or drugs may agitate or create paranoia and aggressive behavior.

**Concentration Problems:** such as difficulty recalling instructions, forgetfulness, repetition of error, and staring into space indicate a troubled employee.

**Depression:** causes nearly one in seven to commit a violent act either upon themselves or others. Symptoms of depression include despair, ambivalence, slowed work pace, continual sad or blank facial expression, withdrawal, self-condemnation and self-destructive behavior, hopelessness, inappropriate guilt/shame, and poor personal hygiene.

**History of Violence:** is the best predictor of violent behavior.

**Inconsistent Work Patterns and Attendance Problems:** include periods of very high and very low work productivity as well as unexplained or improbable excuses for absences.

**Obsessive Interest in Weapons and Violent Incidents:** may be revealed in casual conversations, subscriptions to magazines such as Solder of Fortune, and by preoccupation with hobbies such as marksmanship. An obsession with an impending apocalypse, or destruction of the world, is also common among unstable individuals.

**Obsession with Job:** may cause a deeper sense of loss in the case of a poor performance review or termination. These individuals may be loners, having little else of importance in their lives.

**Pathological Blamers:** cannot take responsibility for their own actions. They will not admit wrongdoing, even for minor mistakes, always blaming others, the organization, or the system.

**WARNING SIGNS CONTINUED;**



**Personality Disorders:** can result in antisocial behavior such as repeated fighting and domestic violence. These individuals have little remorse about wrongdoing and will find ways to justify their violent behavior. Mood shifts, inappropriate anger, skillful manipulation of others, and a preoccupation with self are indicators of personality disorders.

**Personal Stress:** can result in excessive personal phone calls, desk pounding or throwing objects, crying, lapses in attention, and general frustration with the surrounding environment. Debt, separation, divorce, or the death of a relative can all cause excessive stress.

**Patterned Poor Interpersonal Relationships:** may result in belligerence, overreaction to criticism, and verbal harassment.

**Psychosis:** is a loss of contact with reality which may be manifested as paranoia, loss of association during conversations, flat facial expressions, extreme ambivalence, hallucinations, poor insight, talking to self, or bizarre delusions.

**Romantic Obsession:** is a fixed upon and idealized romantic love for another person. Behavioral signs may include stalking, numerous phone calls, spying, and unwanted visits and gifts.

**Safety Issues:** like reckless and a sudden increase in accident rate reveal lapses in concentration and disregard for personal/coworker safety.

**Unusual/Changed Behavior:** includes verbal outbursts, inappropriate remarks, and threats such as “they’ll regret this.” A series of escalating threats is a particularly important indicator of potential violent actions.

**Paranoia:** irrational thoughts of being “Set-up.”

# SUPERVISOR PREPARATION

**Supervisor Preparation**  
*Before & Preparation*

These preventative measures can be used to minimize the risk of workplace violence.

Departmental staff should work together to devise specific approaches to implement guidelines.

Careful and thoughtful management of people is the best tool to avoid incidents of workplace violence. Handle problems with and between employees quickly, fairly, and consistently within guidelines set forth by the District.

Maintain open lines of communication with employees. Keep all employees informed of pertinent workplace issues. Conduct open meeting with staff when practical. Ask your employees for safety suggestions and implement them as soon as possible.

Lock doors that lead to non-public work areas. Only lock door from the inside, so that emergency exits are not obstructed.

Design work areas so that there is an unobstructed secondary escape exit where possible.

Coordinate all phases of the termination process through Human Resources. Improperly handled terminations can cause serious humiliation and anger, as well civil liability.

Plan ahead and contact the Solano Community College Police Department for added protection prior to a scheduled visit from an individual who is a known threat.

Establish a code word/distress signal that can be used to convey the need to summon the Police. **911** for emergencies. ***NEVER CALL THE POLICE BUSINESS LINE FOR AN EMERGENCY OR URGENT MATTER.***

Take all threats of violence very seriously. Watch for and document the warning signs.

Make use of all services provided by the Solano Community College District.

*(Police, Health Center, Human Resources, Student Services)*

Additional training in Crisis Intervention and Dealing with Difficult People is available to all members of the college community, and can be arranged by contacting the Chief of Police for the Solano Community College District.

## **Supervisor Preparation**

*During*

Study these guidelines periodically, so you will be able to remember them while under the stress of a threatening situation.

Try to stay calm. Raising your own voice may increase the anxiety of the potentially violent person.

Speak slowly, softly, and clearly to reduce the momentum of the situation.

Move away from any objects, such as scissors or heavy objects that may be employed as a weapon.

Avoid challenging body language such as placing your hands on your hips, moving toward the person, or staring directly at them. Do not turn your back on the individual.

Position yourself, if possible, so an exit route is accessible.

Listen empathetically and pay attention to what the person is saying. Let the person know you will help them within your ability to do so or you will help them seek additional help.

Remain helpful while you summons your supervisor for assistance. Sometimes, the opportunity to talk with the boss will help satisfy an irritated person.

Neither agree nor disagree with distorted statements. Do not argue. Remain calm. Avoid defensive statements. **DO NOT PLACE BLAME ONTO AN ENRAGED PERSON.**

Ask the belligerent person to leave and come back then their anger has subsided.

Ask questions to help regain control of the conversation.

Ask uninvolved parties to leave the area if this can be done safely. Use the prearranged code word to alert your coworker to call the Police.

Never challenge, try to bargain, or make promises you cannot keep.

Describe the consequences of any violent behavior.

Do not physically touch an outraged person or try to force them to leave.

Calmly ask the person to place any weapons in a neutral location while you continue to talk to them.

### **Supervisor Preparation**

*During Continued*

Never attempt to disarm or accept a weapon from the person in question. Weapon retrieval is only to be done by a police officer.

Be as observant as conditions allow as to Who, What, When, Where, and Why for reporting purposes.

### **Supervisor Preparation**

#### *After/Post Incident Response*

After the safety of the workplace is restored, provide detailed facts and information to the Police.

Discuss and/or debrief the incident with your staff.

If necessary, revise your office plan.

Arrangements may need to be made for long term counseling services for both employees and effected family members.

*Do not expect business as usual conditions. Nothing will ever be the same following a serious violent attack. Flexibility, compassion, and understanding will be required to establish a new state of normal operations for organization or individual work groups. Managers and supervisors need to watch closely for signs of stress among employees returning to work following a violent incident.*