



EMT Policy #104

Workplace Violence Prevention & Response Plan

OVERVIEW

The Freedom From Violence Act (M.S. 1.5) states: “The State of Minnesota hereby adopts a policy of zero tolerance of violence. It is state policy that every person in the state has the right to live free from violence.”

In furtherance of this policy, M.S. 15.86 mandates that each state agency, must adopt a goal of zero tolerance of violence in and around the workplace. Each agency is encouraged to develop a plan that describes how the agency will: 1) seek to eliminate any potential for violence in and around the agency workplace and 2) seek to eliminate any potential for violence by affecting the attitudes and behavior of people that the agency serves or regulates. Explore Minnesota adheres to MMB’s statewide [HR/LR Policy #1444: Workplace Violence Prohibited](#), and this plan satisfies our agency responsibility as directed by HR/LR #1444. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. §15.86, EMT’s policy/plan does not create any civil liability on the part of the State of Minnesota.

This prevention plan defines violence as: “Violence is the abusive or unjust exercise of power, intimidation, harassment, and/or the threatened or actual use of force which results in or has a high likelihood of causing hurt, fear, injury, suffering, or death.”

Workplace violence generally falls into four categories:

- A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by a current or former employee, supervisor or manager.
- A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by someone who has some involvement with a current or former employee outside of work; such as an employee’s spouse, significant other, relative, friend, or acquaintance.
- A violent act or threat (perceived or real) by someone receiving service from the agency.
- A violent act by someone totally unrelated to the work environment.

GENERAL STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS

EMT will work to provide a safe workplace for employees and visitors. Each employee, and everyone with whom we come into contact in our work, deserves to be treated with courtesy and respect. This will be accomplished by encouraging mutual respect among all individuals, establishing open and honest communication, and enforcing “zero tolerance” for any type of violent behavior. Through information and training, the agency will work to foster a work environment and culture that is devoid of violence for its customers and employees.

EMT will:

- actively work to prevent and eliminate acts of work-related violence.
- clarify and enforce expectations regarding behaviors for employees, customers, and guests.
- respond promptly, positively, and aggressively to deal with threats or acts of violence. This response will include timely involvement of law enforcement agencies when appropriate.
- prohibit possession of firearms and other dangerous weapons in the workplace.

- treat incidents of work-related threats or acts of violence seriously. Reports of all such acts will be promptly investigated, and management will take action, as necessary, to appropriately address each incident.
- take strong disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from State employment, against employees of the agency who are involved in the commission of work-related threats or acts of violence.
- support criminal prosecution of those who threaten or commit work-related violence against its employees or visitors to its work environment.
- For all its locations, provide information and training for staff to foster:
 - Safe work environment
 - Respectful work environment
 - An environment that is proactive and able to respond to threats (perceived or real) in the workplace

Creating a Low-Risk Environment

- Emphasize good customer service in a way that is fair, efficient, reliable, and understandable, and by treating customers with respect and dignity, thus greatly reducing the potential for workplace violence from external sources.
- Clear expectations of behaviors and interactions for employees, customers, and guests in the workplace established by this plan include zero tolerance for behaviors such as name-calling, obscene language or gestures, throwing things, pushing, stalking, bullying, hazing, unjust exercise of power, negative racial or sexual comments, violent acts of hate such as assault or striking others, inappropriate touching, carrying weapons, making “fun”, showing disrespect for others within the office or at functions outside the agency, or using inappropriate or offensive references for customers and staff.
- Agency managers and supervisors will promote positive behavior and lead by example, by treating employees with respect and dignity. Emphasis will be placed on creating a workplace where the established standards of conduct are clear, communicated, and consistently enforced, and where discipline is used fairly and appropriately.
- Appropriate to their position, all agency staff will be provided with training on managing conflict. Management training will focus on prevention and de-escalation of violence, will include suggestions for appropriate responses to threats and acts of violence, and will identify resources that are available for use once a potential problem has been identified or an incident has occurred.
- Possession by agency personnel of any dangerous weapon, including firearms, in and around the Explore Minnesota Tourism workplace, or while in work status is strictly prohibited.
 - For purposes of the Plan and Policy, the following items are considered to be “dangerous weapons”:
 - Any weapon which, per applicable law, is illegal to possess
 - Any firearm, loaded or unloaded, assembled or disassembled, including pellet, “BB”, and stun guns (electronic incapacitation devices)
 - Replicate firearms, as defined in M.S. 609.713
 - Knives (and other similar instruments) with a blade length more than three inches, other than those present in the workplace for the specific purpose of food preparation and service
 - Any “switchblade” knife
 - “Brass knuckles”, “metal knuckles”, and similar weapons
 - Bows, crossbows and arrows
 - Explosives and explosive devices, including fireworks and incendiary devices
 - “Throwing stars”, “numchucks”, clubs, saps, and any other item commonly used as, or primarily intended for use as a weapon
 - Any object that has been modified to serve as, or has been employed as, a dangerous weapon
 - Any item so designated by the Director of Explore Minnesota Tourism

Possible Predecessors to Workplace Violence

Employees should have knowledge of these predecessors so that they can inform management of potential incidents. The following are indicators that can signal the potential risk of violent episodes:

- Sudden and persistent complaining about being treated unfairly
- Blaming others for personal problems
- Sudden change in behavior, deterioration in job performance
- Statement that they would like something bad to happen to supervisor or another coworker
- Paranoid behavior
- Sudden increased absenteeism
- Sexually harassing, or obsessing about a coworker: sending unwanted gifts, notes, unwanted calling, stalking
- Increased demand of supervisor's time
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Talking to oneself
- Instability in family relationship
- Financial problems combined with not receiving a raise or promotion
- Poor relationships with coworkers or management
- History of violent behavior
- Previous threat, direct or indirect
- Presenting and talking about reading material that is violent in nature
- Carrying a concealed weapon, or flashing one around
- Quiet seething, sullenness
- Refusal to accept criticism about job performance
- Sudden mood swings, depression
- Sudden refusal to comply with rules or refusal to perform duties
- Inability to control feelings, outbursts of rage, swearing, slamming doors, etc.

Awareness

- EMT will encourage use of the Employee Assistance Program. Employees may also choose to seek assistance from private health services to deal with pressures, stress, emotional problems, or other personal issues which could, if ignored, lead to threats or acts of violence.
- Information and instructions will be provided for agency employees and customers regarding appropriate responses to potential safety threats.
- Informational brochures and other methods will be used to familiarize employees with the services offered by the EAP. Information will also be provided about other options for the resolution of personal and work-related problems and violence prevention.

Violence Prevention Responsibilities

Managers and supervisors will:

- Promote positive behavior and lead by example by treating employees with respect and dignity.
- When a threat is made or a violent incident occurs, ensure that a timely and appropriate response is taken.
- Ensure that appropriate disciplinary responses to internal workplace violence and aggression are taken.
- Carry out these responsibilities with the assistance of the agency's Human Resources staff and, as appropriate, other state and local government agents.

Employees will:

- Abide by and promote the policy of zero tolerance of violence in all contacts with coworkers, supervisors, and customers.
- Be familiar with and follow location-specific workplace violence procedures.

Incident Reporting

- All incidents should be reported to the immediate unit or divisional manager/supervisor and the agency's Human Resources staff. Reports should fully detail the specific incident and the names of all persons involved including witnesses. All incidents will be fully investigated by agency management and Human Resources staff with assistance from other state and local agents as appropriate. A full written report will be provided to the Director including follow-up on the response action taken.
 - Authorized management personnel will handle media inquiries regarding incidents of workplace violence.
 - As warranted, local law enforcement agencies or emergency medical personnel should immediately be contacted by dialing 911.

REFERENCES

[HR/LR Policy #1444 Workplace Violence Prohibited](#)

[HR/LR Memo #2021-2 Workplace Violence Prevention and Response](#)

CONTACTS

Operations Manager