

PERA Workplace Violence Prevention and Response Plan

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OVERVIEW

This plan outlines prevention of workplace violence incidents, preparation in case of an incident, response strategies, and considerations for recovery. It is part of our adoption of HR/LR Policy #1444: Workplace Violence Prohibited and by MN Statute 15.86. Any form of threatening or violent behavior by an employee or a third party in the workplace, or threatening or violent behavior that affects the workplace, is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Workplace violence is defined as follows: “Behavior that results in the actual or reasonably perceived threat of physical or emotional harm to an individual or property.”

Workplace is defined as follows: “A location where employees perform job duties. The location need not be a permanent location, physical building, or state owned/leased property.”

Workplace violence generally falls into three categories:

1. A violent act or threat by a current or former employee; or someone who has some involvement with a current or former employee, such as an employee’s spouse, significant other, relative, or another person who has had a dispute with an employee.
2. A violent act or threat by a customer or someone receiving service from the agency.
3. A violent act by someone totally unrelated to the work environment, with the intent to commit a criminal act such as robbery or bombing.

Goals and objectives

PERA has a policy of zero tolerance of workplace violence. It is an agency goal to achieve a work environment that is free from threats and acts of violence. PERA’s objectives are to:

- Develop awareness among employees and customers about violence in the workplace, its prevention, and the agency violence prevention plan.
- Develop and provide education and training opportunities for employees at all organizational levels which includes the following information:
 - Agency violence prevention plan
 - Prevention of workplace violence
 - Supervisory/managerial responsibilities
 - Employee responsibilities
 - Workplace violence response procedures
- Develop procedures to be used when incidents occur.
- Ensure that Retirement Systems’ Workplace Violence Policy is communicated to appropriate staff.
- Communicate personal security procedures and avenues for assistance with violence issues to employees.
- Develop procedures to continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the violence prevention plan.

Roles and Responsibilities

The groups listed below will perform tasks as designated to promote a safe work environment at PERA:

Capitol Security

- Serves as the primary responder to all emergencies and events at the Retirement Systems Building (RSB).
- Provides safety and security to state employees and members of the public on the Capitol complex.
- Provides a quarterly update for the PERA's Building Liaison.

PERA Employees

- Act in accord with and promote the PERA standard of zero tolerance of violence in all contacts with coworkers, supervisors, contractors, and participants.
- Understand and follow workplace violence prevention and response procedures included within this document, including how to report a threat of workplace violence.
- Report to their or any supervisor or manager if they are subject to or witness threatening or violent behavior, or warning signs of violent behavior, in the workplace, that affects the workplace, or that may affect the workplace. If a supervisor or manager is not immediately available, employees may contact the PERA Human Resource Director or the PERA Executive Director. When a situation warrants, employees should call 9-1-1.
- Employees who engage in threatening or violent behavior in the workplace, or threatening or violent behavior that affects the workplace, will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

PERA Managers and Supervisors

- Lead by example in the courteous and professional treatment of employees and participants.
- Create a workplace where established standards of conduct are clear, communicated, consistently enforced, and where corrective action, including discipline, is used fairly and appropriately to deal with instances of unacceptable behavior.
- Understand that knowingly participating in or tolerating workplace violence are subject to discipline up to and including discharge.
- Understand that retaliating against employees or participants making a report of workplace violence is subject to discipline up to and including discharge.
 - Retaliation includes conduct or communication designed to prevent a person from opposing or reporting workplace violence.
- Use team and individual check-ins to obtain an understanding of and gauge how their employees are doing; look for signs of an employee needing help.
- Schedule employee check-ins on an increased frequency when unusual behavior and/or threats surface.
- Encourage any employee that may be experiencing work- or non-work-related issues to contact the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Treat all reports of violence or threats of violence seriously, regardless of the individual or behavior involved.
- Take immediate action to resolve or stabilize violent workplace situations.
- Report perceived threats of violence to the PERA Human Resource Director and Executive Director.
- Call 9-1-1 when a situation warrants.

PERA Senior Leadership

- Models the importance of proactive workplace violence prevention and response.

- Provides executive support for workplace violence prevention and response.
- Reviews biannually the workplace violence prevention and response plans and internal reporting procedures.
- Identifies and remedies gaps in violence prevention readiness.
- Updates this plan and guides the development of relevant policies and procedures, including work rules, standards of conduct, sources for assistance, dealing with difficult calls, etc.

PERA Human Resources

- Ensures that PERA has an agency-specific violence prevention plan.
- Provides a copy of this plan to new PERA employees during onboarding.
- Recommends training materials related to workplace violence prevention and response.

GENERAL STANDARDS AND EXPECTATIONS

Zero Tolerance of Workplace Violence

1. It is the policy of the Retirement System and the responsibility of its managers, its supervisors and all of its employees to maintain a workplace free from threats and acts of violence. The agencies 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. Verbal and non-verbal threats or acts of violence by employees towards co-workers or the public or by the public towards employees is NOT acceptable behavior and should be reported as well. Through information and training, the Retirement Systems will work to foster a work environment and culture that is devoid of violence for its stakeholders and employees.
2. Employees are prohibited from making threats or engaging in violent activities while on Retirement Systems property or customer/client property. Some examples of violent acts are as follows: causing physical injury to another person; making threatening remarks; intentionally damaging property; and carrying a weapon while on the Retirement Systems property or on Retirement Systems business.

See [Retirement Systems’ Workplace Violence Policy](#) and [State of MN Guns in the Workplace Policy](#).

Office Emergencies

1. Every employee should be instructed on where the panic buttons are located (see your Supervisor for instruction) and how to use it. In the event an emergency arises any employee can, and should, press the panic button.
 - a. Once the panic button is pressed Capital Security will call the front office line for information. If possible answer the phone and give whatever information is available. If not and the phone is not answered, Capital Security will deploy assistance. There is no need to call 911.

- b. If the emergency is not near or at the front office, a call can be made to the front office (651- 355–0037 or 0040) instructing the personnel to press the panic button and giving whatever information possible. Or, call 911.

Front Office Coverage

1. Every effort will be made to assure coverage of the front office area at all times during the core office hours. However, there are many daily tasks that require a short absence from the front office to be completed. In the event no personnel is found in the front office, and a guest/visitor is present, it is the responsibility of all PERA employees (who notice the event) to assist the visitor/guest. This is done by simply asking the person if they have been helped. If they have not been assisted, ask them to wait and assure them someone will be right with them.
2. At no time should a visitor/guest who is not escorted and accompanied by a PERA employee be allowed to enter the office suite before or after core office hours. Visitors/guests who arrive early for their appointments (before office hours) should not be allowed in the office suite until there is proper front office coverage or until 7:15 whichever is sooner.
3. Employees working on the weekend must sign in and out at PERA's front desk.

Visitors/Guests

1. Signs are posted outside the elevator and upon entering the office suite to help direct individuals to the front desk.
2. All visitors and/or guests will be instructed to "check in" at the front desk. Check in does not require a "sign in" process but a verbal "check in" and with the front office personnel.
3. After determining the needs of the guest/visitor the Receptionist will call the PERA employee the guest/visitor wishes to see and announce the arrival. The PERA employee called will be required to come to the front office and greet the guest. No guests will be allowed to proceed past the front office without a PERA escort. Front office personnel will be informed of the exceptions.
 - a. Quiet Room: We strongly discourage and want to limit the use and access of the quiet room for anyone who is not a PERA employee. If an individual who is not an employee must use the quiet room, the individual should be accompanied by a PERA employee at all times when not inside the Quiet Room.
4. PERA employees are expected to inform the front office personnel of expected visits from visitors/guests.
5. All members, who obtain or receive information that contains private data, will be asked for ID to assure proper identity.

Business Packages, Mail, and/or Deliveries

1. Items of a smaller nature will be placed on the back cabinet in the front office and the addressee will be notified, via email, of the arrival. The front office personnel assumes no responsibility once the item has been announced.
2. Deliveries will be brought to the addressees in-office workspace will be notified, via email, of the arrival.
3. Deliveries of large items or items that need assistance will be announced by a phone call to the addressee.
4. When applicable, the front office personnel will sign for all items, but they do not take responsibility for the content.

5. Delivery of personal letters or packages through PERA is not allowed. Do not use your work address for delivery of personal mail. Some exception will be made for medical reasons, such as the delivery of medical prescriptions, but will be handled on a case by case basis.

General Phone Calls and Messages

1. To help maintain resources in the front office, and provide full coverage as much as possible, personal calls of a non-emergency matter when the caller requests “go look for the employee” will be declined. Instead a message will be taken and sent via email to the PERA employee.
2. Emergency calls will be treated differently and every effort will be made to locate the employee.
3. Business related calls will be handled on a case by case basis with every effort to use the PERA employees’ voice mail for recording messages.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Active Shooter/Weapons Assault

REMAIN CALM

NEVER ASSUME THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS REPORTED THE POSSIBLE THREAT

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

1. ASSESS

- Type of Weapon
- Location of the individual with the weapon
- Identifying information of the individual with the weapon:
 - Sex
 - Height and Weight
 - Hair/Skin/Eye Color
 - Color and Type of Clothing
 - Any identifying tattoos/piercings

2. CONTACT

- **IMMEDIATELY CALL 911**
 - Give them any information that may help them identify the individual with the weapon (see above)
 - Law Enforcement will deploy to the area of an active shooter with the primary goal of stopping the shooter
- **Push the panic button** at the front desk or in any of the counseling rooms **or use the front door or parking ramp intercom** to notify Capital Security

- Once the panic button is pressed, Capital Security will call the front office line for information. If possible answer the phone and give whatever information is available. If not and the phone is not answered, Capital Security will deploy assistance.
- Capitol Security personnel are not armed and cannot neutralize a shooter. To the extent possible, they will respond to the area to assist with any immediate medical needs, evacuation, containment, and assist responding law enforcement personnel.
- Use the front door or any parking ramp intercom to notify Capitol Security
- Alert co-workers in the building
- **Move to a safe location:** exit the building if possible. If not, seek refuge in a closed-door office or conference room.
- **ONCE SOMEWHERE SAFE, send email to your supervisor**
 - SUBJECT LINE: WEAPONS ASSAULT
 - EMAIL BODY: Include any information that can help identify the threat
 - What type of weapon
 - Location of the individual with the weapon
 - Identifying information of the individual with the weapon:
 - Sex
 - Height and Weight
 - Hair/Skin/Eye Color
 - Color and Type of Clothing
 - Any identifying tattoos/piercings
 - **TIMELINESS IS KEY.**
 - YOU DO NOT NEED ALL INFORMATION BEFORE SENDING THE EMAIL.
 - GRAMMAR AND SPELLING ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR LIFE.
 - **SEND FOLLOW UP EMAILS AS YOU GET MORE INFORMATION.**

Bomb Threat

REMAIN CALM - DON'T HANG UP - KEEP TALKING

Take threats seriously, whether direct and specific or not

Be prepared to take action

Remain calm

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

1. Assess: See if you can determine:

- Location of bomb
- Description and type of bomb
- Time set for detonation
- Type of explosive
- Why bomb was placed
- Who placed the bomb (might be individual or group) /anything to identify the caller
 - Phone number / Caller ID

- The person's sex
- Speech patterns
- Accents
- Words Used

2. Contact:

- **IMMEDIATELY SEND EMAIL TO YOUR SUPERVISOR**
 - SUBJECT: BOMB THREAT
 - EMAIL BODY: Include any information that can help security identify the possible threat.
 - Where are you located:
 - Where is the bomb located:
 - Who placed the bomb:
 - What type of bomb is it:
 - **TIMELINESS IS KEY.**
 - YOU DO NOT NEED ALL INFORMATION BEFORE SENDING THE EMAIL.
 - GRAMMAR AND SPELLING ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR LIFE.
 - **SEND FOLLOW UP EMAILS AS YOU GET MORE INFORMATION.**
- **CALL ASAP: 911 or Capital Security (651-296-2100)**
 - If still on the phone: use another phone or have a coworker call Emergency Services OR
 - Call as soon as the person hangs up

3. Note anything that looks or smells suspicious, but do not touch anything you cannot identify

Building Exits/Evacuation Plan

REMAIN CALM

WALK, DO NOT RUN

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

1. Assess

- Evacuation necessary for the following situations:
 - Smoke or fire
 - Bomb threats
 - Armed and hostile intruder (if possible)
- For the following situations, relocate within the building:
 - Severe weather
 - Armed and hostile intruder (if evacuation is not possible)

2. Act

- When you hear the building's fire alarms, or receive an order to evacuate, immediately take the nearest stairway to the ground floor and exit the building according to the [evacuation map](#).
 - Also see [Evacuation Plan for all building exits](#).
- Area Monitors are responsible for checking their designated area(s) to ensure that all employees and guests have left the area, for making sure common areas like restrooms and hallways are deserted, and checking that nobody is left in one of the stairwells.
 - See the "2nd Floor - Evacuation Monitor and Designated Backup List" for area monitors
- All staff must proceed across the street to the parking lot at 69 Empire Drive
- No one is to re-enter the premises until the authorities give us an "all-clear."

3. Contact

- Each person is to inform his/her immediate supervisor or manager of safe evacuation.
- Supervisors or managers should inform the Executive Director or PERA Building Liaison that all personnel are accounted for.
- Upon the arrival of authorities, the Executive Director, PERA Building Liaison or, in their absence a supervisor or manager must inform them if any staff members cannot be accounted for.
- No one is to re-enter the premises until the authorities give us an “all-clear.”

Staff Location	Exit
BSC Calculation BSC Claims Lobby Counseling Rooms Large Conference Room	Main office lobby entrance down through East stairwell out the Main front door. If Main door is blocked, exit through the north door in parking lot link. Door is on left just before door to the ramp.
Member Service Center Finance	Member Services Center door, down through East stairwell out the Main front door. If Main door is blocked, exit through the north door in parking lot link. Door is on left just before door to the ramp.
Information Systems Central Support Services Break Room Mail Room Quiet Room Conference Rooms Restrooms	West entrance down through Northwest stairwell right out the North emergency exit.
AIM CSE Executive Library	Down through Southwest stairwell, left & then out the Southwest emergency exit, which is in back of the dock area. Then move to the front of the dock and across the street.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is a sensitive matter for those who experience it. It can be challenging to end, and individuals may need a coordinated effort of support and resources. **No individual shall be required to disclose if they are a victim of violence, including domestic violence, or have filed an order for protection.**

1. ASSESS:

Warning signs that someone may be a victim of violence, including domestic violence, may include:

- Obvious injuries that are attributed to falls or accidents that seem out of character.
- Attire that may be used to disguise injuries, such as wearing sunglasses indoors.

- Schedule changes, such as sudden absenteeism, tardiness, or working longer hours to avoid going home.
- Changes in job performance.
- Workplace disruptions, such as disruptive visits to the workplace by a current or ex-partner, or harassing phone calls to the worker, coworkers or employer.
- Minimization where the employee downplays injuries or harassing behavior.
- Timing of gifts, it is noticed that the employee receives flowers or gifts at the workplace after periods of emotional distress or injury.

There may be factors unrelated to domestic violence contributing to these behaviors. PERA will use the EAP and internal offices such as Human Resources and Safety in assessing and responding to individual situations.

For employees who self-disclose that they are a victim of violence, including domestic violence, or have filed an order for protection, PERA may take the following actions:

- Refer the employee to EAP.
- Provide the employee with the same level of confidentiality as any other employee seeking assistance with a sensitive personal issue.
- Do not discriminate against the employee as a result of the employee's self-disclosure.

PERA will assist employees who self-disclose that they are victims of violence, including domestic violence, subject to business needs and existing collective bargaining agreements (CBA), including:

- Approval of paid or unpaid leave.
- Relocation of current work space.
- Temporary or permanent transfer to an alternate work location.
- Temporary adjustment to work schedule/hours.
- Setting up procedures for alerting security.
- Escort for entry to and exit from the workplace.

Where an order for protection exists and the parties to the order are employed by the same agency or are working in the same building, the agency must allow for the safe separation of the parties. PERA will take steps to ensure a safe and productive work environment for the affected employees and their coworkers, which may include notifying the supervisor or human resources personnel of the order for protection, and closely monitoring the affected employees' behavior and exchanges with other employees or third parties. PERA may speak privately with the employee who was granted the order for protection to inquire whether additional steps may create a safer and more productive work environment.

2. CONTACT

- Supervisor or HR
 - **No individual shall be required to disclose if they are a victim of violence, including domestic violence, or have filed an order for protection.** However, if you so choose, you may speak to your supervisor or to PERA's HR Director about a domestic abuse situation. Speaking with your supervisor or HR may help you gain access to a number of resources to help you and others in that situation.
- MN Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- Minnesota supplies all state employees with access to the Employee Assistance Program, LifeMatters. All interactions are confidential and will not be shared with anyone (including your workplace or supervisor) without your written consent. However, counselors are required by law to notify authorities if they have serious concerns regarding someone's safety. Anyone may use EAP anonymously.
 - **Six counseling sessions.** You and your family can receive six free counseling sessions per person, per year, per topic. If you previously redeemed these sessions through Deer Oaks, your session count will start over fresh with LifeMatters.
 - **Culturally sensitive counselors.** If it is helpful, you can request a counselor who identifies as a person of color, shares their sexual orientation, gender, and more. This customized service helps provide a safe space where you and your family members feel valued and get meaningful support.
 - **Free well-being webinars.** Attend webinars to support your well-being, work, and life. [Check out upcoming webinars.](#)
 - **Specialists for law enforcement and first responders.** A team of specialists can assist you with the unique challenges and situations you may encounter based on your role.
 - **Childcare and elder care search assistance.** Get assistance finding available care, including referrals matched to your specific search criteria.
 - **Get legal and financial assistance.** Receive free consultations on legal, financial, and identify theft concerns.
- Ways to Contact MN's EAP
 - Call
 - Talk to a counselor anytime 1-800-657-3719 or 651-259-3840.
 - Click
 - [Browse an online resource library or connect via email.](#)
 - **password:** stmn1
 - Chat
 - Text "Hello" to 61295

Incident Involving a Minor/Vulnerable Adult

NEVER ASSUME THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS REPORTED THE INCIDENT

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

In responding to incidents of workplace violence, employees should be aware of circumstances under which they might interact with minors (individuals under the age of 18) and vulnerable adults. Depending on the situation, mandatory reporting could be required to protect health and welfare.

1. Assess

In particular, following situations constitute maltreatment:

- Neglect (failure to supply food, clothing, medical care, education, etc.)
- Threats of injury
- Co-occurrence with domestic violence
- Physical abuse

- Sexual abuse, sex trafficking, and exploited youth
- Mental injury (psychological capacity or emotional stability)

For more background, see [Minn Stat. 626.556](#) (Reporting of Maltreatment of Minors)

2. Contact:

- SEND EMAIL TO YOUR SUPERVISOR
 - SUBJECT: Incident Involving Vulnerable Adult or Incident Involving a Minor
 - EMAIL BODY: Include any information that may be useful in assessing the incident.
 - Name or description of the vulnerable adult or minor involved in the incident
 - Name or description of the abuser in the situation
 - Event/observations that may be signs of maltreatment

Suspicious Mail/Packages

REMAIN CALM

NEVER ASSUME THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS REPORTED THE POSSIBLE THREAT

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

Suspicious Package Found

1. Assess

- Where is the package
- What does the package look like
- Do you know who delivered the package
- Are there any names on the package
- **Avoid contact with the package**

2. Contact

- **IMMEDIATELY CALL CAPITAL SECURITY (651-296-2100)**
 - Provide them a description of the package (see above)
- **SEND EMAIL TO YOUR SUPERVISOR**
 - SUBJECT: SUSPICIOUS PACKAGE
 - EMAIL BODY: Include any information that can help identify the items.
 - Where is the package
 - What does the package look like
 - Do you know who delivered the package
 - Are there any names on the package
 - **TIMELINESS IS KEY.**
 - YOU DO NOT NEED ALL INFORMATION BEFORE SENDING THE EMAIL.
 - GRAMMAR AND SPELLING ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR LIFE.
 - **SEND FOLLOW UP EMAILS AS YOU GET MORE INFORMATION.**

3. If the package is deemed a threat:

- Capitol Security will activate the fire alarm.
- Evacuate the building as if there is fire alarm.

Suspicious Mail Found

1. Assess:

- What does the mail item look like
- Where is the mail item located
- Do you know who delivered the mail item
- Are there any names on the mail item

2. Contact

- **IMMEDIATELY CALL CAPITAL SECURITY (651-296-2100)**
 - Provide them a description of the package (see above)
- **SEND EMAIL TO YOUR SUPERVISOR**
 - SUBJECT: SUSPICIOUS MAIL
 - EMAIL BODY: Include any information that can help identify the items
 - Where is the mail item
 - What does the mail item look like
 - Do you know who delivered the mail item
 - Are there any names on the mail item
 - **TIMELINESS IS KEY.**
 - YOU DO NOT NEED ALL INFORMATION BEFORE SENDING THE EMAIL.
 - GRAMMAR AND SPELLING ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR LIFE.
 - **SEND FOLLOW UP EMAILS AS YOU GET MORE INFORMATION.**

3. If the mail item is unopened, do not open it.

- Keep others from the area

4. If the mail item is opened and contains a substance

- Avoid directly contacting or breathing in the substance
- Do not clean up the powder or substance
- Evacuate the immediate area and close off the room if possible.
- Keep others from entering the area
- Wash your hands with soap and water as soon as possible.
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or other parts of the body
- If clothing is contaminated, avoid brushing or shaking the substance if possible.

Parking Ramp

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

Capitol Security: 651-296-2100

Parking ramp Intercoms report directly to the Capitol Security Operations Center in the Department of Administration Building.

Intercom Description:

- Intercoms are marked with a large, yellow "Emergency" sign

Intercom locations:

- In each ramp stairway.
- In each doorway going into the elevator lobby (west side center of ramp).

Intercom operation:

- Push the button.
 - The security camera closest to the intercom activates automatically. Camera images are recorded 24/7.
- Capitol Security views the immediate situation and communicates with the person who activated the intercom.
- Capitol Security dispatches an officer, if needed.

Safety precautions

- When possible, use the buddy system if leaving the building after normal working hours.
- Before working late, consider moving your car closer to one of the doorways going into the ramp's elevator lobby.
- Watch around you while walking to your car.
- Have your keys ready.
- Look in your back seat before opening your car door.
- If you see anything suspicious, head back into the building as quickly as possible and **call Capitol Security at 651-296-2100**.
- Lock the doors of your vehicle as you leave the ramp to enter the building.

Suspicious activity or perceived threat

- Use a ramp intercom to contact Capitol Security or stop by the security desk.
 - Tell them the ramp location of the suspicious activity or threat.
 - They will monitor the cameras and send a security officer.
- The best practice is to walk back into the building, if possible. The building is the safest place to be because the doors from the ramp can only be opened with an Employee ID Card.

Fire:

- Use the intercom to notify Capitol Security of the fire before attempting to put it out. They will call 911 to dispatch the fire department.
- Fire extinguishers are located throughout the ramp and are labeled with large red signs.
- Use the extinguisher only if you are comfortable and if the situation permits. Best to wait for help, if possible.

Verbal Assault

REMAIN CALM

NEVER ASSUME THAT SOMEONE ELSE HAS REPORTED THE INCIDENT

MN PERA OFFICE ADDRESS: 60 Empire Dr, Suite 200, St. Paul, MN 55103

1. Assess

As we work with members, employers, and other stakeholders, it is inevitable that we will need to interact with difficult or irritable people. If a situation is becoming more tense, make note of the following:

- Identification of the person you are interacting with:
 - Name/Caller ID
 - Phone Number or Email Address

- Messages, emails, letters, or other description of the threat given
- Physical description of the person if possible
- Speech patterns/accent
- What the interaction is about
- Any words or phrases said by the person or actions taken by the person that may signal rising aggression or a threat.

2. Contact

Not every tense interaction will require intervention from a supervisor/capitol security. There are steps listed below that may help you defuse a situation. HOWEVER, IF YOU FEAR FOR THE SAFETY OF YOURSELF OR OTHERS:

- **CALL: 911 or Capital Security (651-296-2100)**
- **EMAIL: Supervisor**
 - SUBJECT: VERBAL ABUSE
 - EMAIL BODY: Include any information that can help security identify the possible threat.
 - Who you are speaking/interacting with
 - Where you are located (in the office or teleworking)
 - What is being said
 - Actions you have already taken.
 - **TIMELINESS IS KEY.**
 - YOU DO NOT NEED ALL INFORMATION BEFORE SENDING THE EMAIL.
 - GRAMMAR AND SPELLING ARE NOT AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR SAFETY.
- **Push the panic button** at the front desk or in any of the counseling rooms **or use the front door or parking ramp intercom** to notify Capital Security
 - Once the panic button is pressed, Capital Security will call the front office line for information. If possible answer the phone and give whatever information is available. If not and the phone is not answered, Capital Security will deploy assistance.
- **Alert co-workers in the building**

3. Defusing hostility

At times, the words we say may unintentionally exacerbate a situation. The chart below shows how some words/phrases may be misconstrued:

What was said	What the client perceived
To be honest with you...	Until now, I've been lying, but now...
Trust me...	I'm much smarter than you are.
Again...	Didn't you hear me the first time?
Basically...	Since you are dumb...
Obviously...	Are you that stupid?
As I said before...	Weren't you listening?
It's on the website...	Doesn't everyone have a computer?
We sent a notice...	You can read, can't you?

4. Dealing with difficult people

Tips for working well with others

- Suggest solutions

- Don't blame
- Watch your words and nonverbal communication
- Never blindsides others
- Keep your promises
- Share credit
- Help others find their greatness

Tips for confrontational conversations

- Prepare yourself to confront the real issue
- Make your initial statement and stop talking
- Don't argue
- Listen to the response
- Respond carefully
- Steer the conversation toward the conflict resolution desired before the confrontation
- Stay focused on the real issue

Tips for resolving conflict

- Create supportive environment
- Have clear goals
- Seek win-win outcome
- Hear, understand, and accept each person's point of view
- Accept that there are different points of view
- Explore solutions and alternatives
- Agree on next actions and measurement
- Follow up on agreement

RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Should an incident of workplace violence occur, PERA leadership, human resources, and other key staff must turn their attention to strategies to ensure the agency continues functioning and to assist employees and the public in recovery.

Emergency Drills

The Retirement Systems building holds regular emergency drills for fire and tornado warnings. These drills are meant to remind building employees about where building exits are located and about evacuation and shelter plans. Information about Building Exits and Evacuation Plans can also be found on pages 8-9 of this document.

Violence and Threat Reporting

Incidents of violence can be reported to PERA HR by any employee using the Violence and Threat Reporting Form. For identifying, monitoring, and guiding ongoing responses, a record will be kept by PERA HR of all threats and concerns reported.

Once an employee has reported a violent incident, threat, or warning sign, they may be contacted for additional information from the PERA Human Resource Director. Once information is collected, it will be

documented and investigated following workplace violence prevention and response procedures identified within this document.

All information in reports is confidential and will only be shared if necessary. All reporting parties will remain confidential when possible. When reporting, individuals may choose to remain confidential and contact information will not be collected.

Any form of retaliation directed against an individual who makes a report or participates in any investigation of a report under this policy is prohibited. Employees and management may not engage in behavior which has the purpose or effect of retaliating against another employee. Retaliation includes conduct or communication designed to prevent a person from opposing or reporting workplace violence. Any employee who is found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to discipline up to, and including, discharge. Third parties who are found to have engaged in retaliation will be subject to appropriate action. If an employee feels they are being retaliated against or have witnessed such conduct, they can contact their supervisor, any member of management, PERA Human Resources, or the Office of Equity, Access, and Inclusion.

Critical Incident Response Debriefing and Internal Communications

After an incident, it is important that some form of debriefing and incident review follows. Debriefing is important to inform others of the incident and help control the spread of false information. The more severe the incident, the more structured and formal this debriefing process should be. Debriefing PERA leadership, and employees is a particularly valuable opportunity to understand what happened and to identify gaps, deficiencies, and success to improve future planning efforts. When preparing for a debriefing, consider the following:

- Have the debrief facilitated by someone who was not directly involved in the incident.
- Consult legal counsel to ensure the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act is followed and all necessary criminal and civil legal considerations are weighed prior to disclosing information.
- Enlist the assistance of communications staff on best practices to reach employees in a sensitive, appropriate, and productive way.
- Anticipate the dissemination of information more widely than the workplace and be careful how information is presented to avoid the spread of inaccuracies.

Communications

PERA will work with its legal counsel and coordinate communications internally prior to providing broad internal communications and/or external statements to the media and others, and will pay particular attention to disclosure limitations under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. PERA may contact the Employee Assistance Program's Organizational Health team for information on how to have a conversation with employees after an event or emergency in the workplace.

Legal Considerations

Following a critical incident it is important to consider responsibilities and limitations under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Prior to releasing or discussing government data, such as personnel data, in internal communications with staff or with outside parties, PERA will consult with legal counsel.

PERA must also consider the possible impact of creating or releasing information about the incident on future criminal prosecution or civil lawsuits. Finally, PERA will consult with legal counsel about evidence preservation, including witness accounts and physical evidence.

Labor Relations

Representatives from bargaining units should be notified about the incident. PERA will ensure that the recovery process is consistent with bargained requirements for communication, work schedules, locations, etc. In addition, union representatives may be valuable partners to identify gaps or deficiencies highlighted by the incident to address them in future planning.

Workers' Compensation

While the goal is to prevent incidents where feasible and to minimize the severity of those that do happen, it is possible that a matter could escalate to the point where employees are injured. Injury reporting is a part of the After Incident Reporting Form, and management of workers' compensation claims will be handled by PERA's HR team.