

Workplace Violence Prevention Plan

If you're experiencing a workplace violence incident, call 911.
Additional information can be found in the [Emergency Response Plan](#).

Objective

Under the Minnesota Freedom from Violence Act (Minn. Stat. § 1.50), the State of Minnesota adopted a policy of zero tolerance of violence. The Minnesota State Retirement System (MSRS) forbids workplace violence and promotes actions to facilitate and maximize a work environment free from threats and acts of violence. This plan presents strategies and tools to anticipate, prevent, and review conditions and incidents that may result in workplace violence at our agency.

This plan is effective as of the issue date and remains in effect until rescinded or revised.

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1.0 Plan Statement

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 mandates that employers provide their employees with a workplace free from recognized hazards to safety and health.

Essential elements of safety and health programs also apply to the prevention and management of potential or actual workplace violence.

These elements include:

- Management commitment to workplace health and safety
- Employee involvement in workplace health and safety determinations
- Analysis of workplace health and safety conditions
- Workplace hazard prevention and control
- Training for management and employees

Workplace violence prevention is a priority for MSRS.

2.0 Audience

This plan applies to all MSRS employees. This plan is initiated to prevent and prepare MSRS for the possibility of physical or emotional harm to individuals or property by:

- Promoting a low-risk work environment
- Developing awareness about threats
- Highlighting sources for assistance
- Planning for incident management
- Including employee input in health and safety decision making
- Providing assistance in:
 - Reporting of violence or a threat of violence
 - Accessing Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources
 - Requesting help for a co-worker or staff member who is threatened or who is threatening others

3.0 Compliance

An employee who violates this plan may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

4.0 Definitions

MERLIN

The MSRS intranet site.

Third party

Individuals who are not MSRS employees, but have interactions with MSRS employees, such as:

- Applicants for MSRS employment
- Vendors
- Contractors
- Participants
- Business partners

- Other individuals with whom MSRS employees interact in the course of their work

Threatening Behavior

Any verbal or physical conduct that would reasonably cause fear of physical or emotional harm to individuals or property.

Violent Behavior

The use of physical force that causes or is intended to cause physical or emotional harm to individuals or to property.

Warning signs of violent behavior: Observable behavior that leads to a reasonable belief that an individual may engage in violent behavior.

Warning signs of violent behavior may include, but are not limited to:

- Intensely angry demeanor
- Significant loss of temper
- Articulated plan to commit violence
- Oral or written remarks about violent behavior
- Discussing the use of weapons of any kind in a harmful manner toward others
- Bringing weapons into the workplace
- Repeated aggressive movements such as pounding, banging, or slamming items

These warning signs may be unrelated to an intent to engage in workplace violence.

Workplace

A location where state agency employees perform job duties. The location need not be a permanent location or a physical building, but can be anywhere public service is provided.

MSRS has a responsibility to plan for violence when it intrudes upon the telework environment or have the potential to impact the safety and productivity of teleworkers or onsite workers. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has classified workplace violence into four types — one of which is “personal relationship” violence where the perpetrator has a harmful relationship with an employee that impacts the work environment.

In cases where employees are the perpetrators, workplace harassment (and other forms of violence) are prohibited regardless of where the employees are working (in person, teleworking, or on leave). State policies prohibit the use of devices to harass others through emails, phone calls, text messages, and video conferencing platforms

[MSRS Hybrid Work Policy](#) is applicable to all employees of MSRS regardless of work location including leased or non-state owned or leased facilities. MSRS’ Workplace Violence and Prevention Plan is applicable in these spaces. Landlords and other tenants may also have their own violence prevention and incident response plans. In cases of leased space, managers and supervisors should familiarize themselves and conduct training for their staff on building evacuation and emergency procedures.

Workplace Violence

Behavior that results in the actual or reasonably-perceived threat of physical or emotional harm to an individual or property.

5.0 Roles & Responsibilities

The groups listed below will perform tasks as designated to promote a low-risk work

environment at MSRS:

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 RSB Safety and Security Representatives
- Facilitate weekly Capital Complex Security meetings

MSRS Employees

- Act in accord with and support the MSRS standard of zero tolerance of violence in all contacts with coworkers, supervisors, vendors, and participants
- Understand and follow workplace violence-prevention procedures, including how to report a threat of workplace violence
- Report to their 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 MSRS Deputy Director or 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
- Ensure your personal contact information, emergency contacts, and home address are current in Self Service and emergency mass notification system
- Be on the alert for messages sent via the emergency mass notification system

MSRS Human Resources

- Ensures that MSRS has an agency-specific violence-prevention plan
- Ensures the MSRS plan is regularly reviewed and maintained
- Provides a copy of this plan, with a brief summary, to new MSRS employees during onboarding
- Leads the MSRS Health and Wellness Committee
- Recommends training materials to advance employee awareness of violence-in-the-workplace issues
- When requested by the MSRS Executive Director or Deputy Director, responds to threats of violence from an HR perspective by providing input and feedback on incident-management plans

MSRS Managers and Supervisors

- Lead by example in the courteous and professional treatment of employees and participants
- Create a workplace where established policies, plans, procedures, and standards of conduct are clear and communicated
- Fair and appropriate action is consistent with instances of unacceptable behavior.
- Understand that participating in or tolerating known workplace violence is 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

- Consistently obtain an understanding of and gauge how employees are doing; look for signs of an employee needing help
- Schedule employee check-ins on an increased frequency if unusual behavior and/or threats surface
- Encourage any employee that may be experiencing work- or non-work-related issues to contact EAP
- Treat all reports or threats of violence seriously, regardless of the individual or behavior involved
- Take immediate action to resolve or stabilize violent workplace situations to protect people from harm
- Report perceived threats of violence to the MSRS Executive Director and MSRS Deputy Director
- Call 911 when a situation warrants

MSRS Mini Management Team (MMT)

- Models the importance of proactive workplace violence prevention and response
- Provides executive support for workplace violence prevention
- Develops 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.
- Provides input to the RSB Safety and Security Representatives
- Supports training enabling employees to increase their awareness of workplace violence concerns
- Participates in the development of incident-management plans, as requested by the Executive Director, in response to a threat of violence

RSB Safety and Security Representatives Group

Represents and consists of employees of MSRS, PERA, TRA, and SBI in addressing safety and security concerns. This is led by the MSRS CFO/Facilities Manager in collaboration with the Department of Public Safety.

- Holds quarterly meetings to promote the physical security of the RSB
- Reviews and evaluates the risk of reported threats
- Reviews and evaluates the risk of potential external threats reported by Capitol Security or other partners
- Recommends procedures to prevent and respond to threats of violence
- Reviews this plan and incident-management procedures related to this plan
- Evaluates suggestions for plan improvements
- Coordinates violence-prevention activities with standing RSB Health and Wellness Committee members
- Provides input and feedback on incident-management plans, as requested by the Executive Director or Deputy Director, in response to a threat of violence; follows up on any security-specific concerns as directed
- Participate in weekly Capital Complex Security meetings
- Collaborate with MSRS HR to ensure annual workplace violence prevention training is provided to MSRS staff

RSB Health and Wellness Committee

Represents and consists of employees of MSRS, PERA, TRA, and SBI in addressing personal safety concerns and encourages health and wellness.

- Reviews personal safety recommendations from RSB Safety and Security Representatives or Health and Wellness Committee and implements within MSRS
- Communicates and shares opportunities of health and wellness available

Third Parties

- Act in accord with and support the MSRS standard of zero tolerance of violence in all contacts with agency staff, vendors, and participants
- Third parties who engage in threatening or violent behavior in the workplace, or that affects the workplace, will be subject to appropriate action
- Third parties are encouraged to report if they are subject to or witness threatening or violent behavior, or if they sense warning signs of violent behavior

6.0 Communication

MSRS will foster awareness among employees about violence in the workplace and its prevention as presented in this plan.

Communication methods will include:

- Partnering with the following groups to provide information about personal security and violence prevention:
 - Human Resources
 - RSB Health and Wellness Committee
 - Statewide Non-Cabinet Workplace Violence Prevention Committee
 - RSB Safety and Security Representatives
 - MSRS Safety & Security Team
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- Developing, delivering, or obtaining and distributing violence-prevention training modules for employees.

7.0 Training

MSRS will develop, deliver, or obtain and distribute violence-prevention training modules for employees. On an annual basis, a minimum of one training will be provided and coordinated along with Enterprise Annual Compliance training.

Violence-prevention training is provided during the onboarding of new staff, annually to all staff, and as developing situations may warrant.

Trainings may include:

- Capitol Security Active Shooter
- Dealing with Difficult People
- De-escalation exercise
- Homeland Security Active Shooter
- Workplace Violence and Prevention
- Prohibition of Harassment

- Security Awareness

Role-specific training may include:

- The agency's violence prevention plan
- The effects of workplace violence
- The prevention of workplace violence
- Supervisory/managerial responsibilities to identify and reduce the risks of workplace violence
- Employee responsibilities in identifying and reporting threats of violence
- Incident reporting and response processes

8.0 Reporting

Follow the reporting procedures when it is safe to do so. Do not physically engage a hostile or threatening person, unless to protect yourself or others against an immediate threat of physical injury.

All incidents falling under the definition of violence as stated in the plan should be reported using the *MSRS Workplace Violence Incident Threat Assessment Form*.

9.0 Emergency Situations

9.1 Common Forms of Workplace Violence

Workplace violence prevention is everyone's responsibility. Familiarize yourself with your surroundings and ask yourself if anything looks out of place or out of the ordinary.

Workplace violence may take on varied forms:

- A violent act or threat by a current employee, 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.
- A violent act or threat by a participant or someone receiving service from MSRS.
- A violent act by someone totally unrelated to the work environment. For example, someone who enters an office with no business reason for their visit, though there may or may not be a connection to a staff member.
- Behaviors in interpersonal relationships where someone's safety may not be immediately threatened (e.g., veiled threats, stalking, intimidation, or aggression). These behaviors may be important warning signs of future violence and can offer MSRS an opportunity for proactive intervention. However, these behaviors do not predict that an act of workplace violence will follow.

9.2 Threats

The agency may receive threats against the department or a member of the department, or another agency or employee.

Take all threats seriously. If necessary, immediately remove yourself from the situation to get to a safe place. When it is safe to do so, report the threat or violence to any of the following the

report guidance above.

9.3 Firearm(s) and Concealed Weapon(s) Threat

In general, Minnesota law prohibits individuals from carrying firearms in public unless the individual has a valid permit to carry the weapon (Minn. Stat. §§624.714; 624.7181; 97B.045).

Minnesota's permit-to-carry law (Minn. Stat. §624.714) allows operators of private establishments that are generally open to the public to ban all firearms from their establishments, even when the firearm owner has a valid permit. Public entities do not have this legal flexibility and cannot ban firearms from their facilities.

- Minnesota's permit-to-carry law specifically allows an employer, private or public, to "establish policies that restrict the carry or possession of firearms by its employees while acting in the course and scope of employment" (Minn. Stat. §624.714, subd. 18(a).
- MSRS prohibits any employee from carrying a weapon while on MSRS property or while on MSRS business.

9.4 Non-emergency situations

Non-emergency situations should be reported as soon as possible after the incident occurs. Gather and document as much information and report in a timely manner.

10.0 Response

10.1 MSRS Safety and Security Representative Members Group

Purpose:

- Assess apparent threats to individual employees and their workplaces
- Reviews recommendations from RSB Safety and Security Representatives or RSB Health and Wellness Committee and implements within MSRS
- Recommend or deliver responses to specific threats
- Develop subject matter expertise to advise leadership regarding security practices
- Ensure guidance is consistent throughout the organization
- Keep the agency up-to-date on best practices in prevention, response, and recovery
- Assigned representative members attend Statewide Non-Cabinet Workplace Violence Prevention Committee and RSB Safety and Security Representatives meetings

The MSRS Safety and Security Representative members are comprised of several subject matter experts across MSRS that discuss potential threats to the agency as a pro-active means to measure the potential of violent or physical threat to the agency and its team member(s).

The representatives shall meet as needed to discuss individual threats and/or escalating tensions amongst employees, vendors, and/or members of the public to determine de-escalation opportunities to reduce the threat.

The representatives shall meet on a quarterly basis to discuss identified areas of improvement and potential risk for threats of violence in the workplace.

Members include:

- Executive Director
- Deputy Executive Director

- Chief Financial Officer / Facilities Manager
- Chief Information Security Officer
- Human Resources Director
- Business Continuity Coordinator

Ad hoc Members are included as necessary.

10.2 Incident Command Team (ICT)

Depending on the scale and impacts of the incident, the MSRS Safety and Security Representatives may recommend activating the ICT to manage the response to and recovery from the incident.

10.3 Responding to Hostile Behavior

In the event of direct threats and physical assault, call 911 immediately, and follow the worksite safety or emergency response plans. Do not physically engage a hostile or threatening person, unless as a last resort.

Response guidelines include:

- Respond promptly and genuinely when employees alert others to a situation
- Remain calm
- Assess whether the situation is:
 - Contained
 - Ready for de-escalation
 - Threatening
- Consult and/or act if needed
- Refer to resources (threat assessment team, security, human resources, Employee Assistance Program (EAP), etc.)
- Alert building safety, security, or other appropriate resources

10.4 Responding to Violent Intruders

In the event of violent intruder, call 911 immediately, and follow building emergency response plans. It is important to be familiar with your building emergency response plan, including contact information and what actions to take immediately. Considerations include:

- Remain as calm as possible and set the example for all employees
- Ensure emergency services are contacted, as needed
- Evacuate staff and visitors via a pre-planned evacuation route to a safe area (if applicable)
- Lock and barricade doors if evacuation is not possible
- Account for staff and visitors

10.5 Time Allowance for Threat Management Planning

For threats where there is perceived to be time to plan, the Executive Director or delegate will call the following to prepare an incident-specific management plan:

- Incident Command Team (ICT)
- Capitol Security
- The applicable parties

As this plan is further developed, it will include actions after the resolution or occurrence of an incident including referral to EAP, temporary relocation of employee(s), approved time off, etc.

11.0 Recovery

11.1 Retaliation

Any form of retaliation directed against an individual who makes a report under this policy or participates in any investigation of a report under this policy is strictly prohibited. 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 in violation of this policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge. Third parties who are found to have engaged in retaliation in violation of this policy will be subject to appropriate action.

11.2 Follow-up After an Incident

The Incident Command Team (ICT) follows direction documented in the Business Continuity COOP Plan, if there is a business continuity event. If there is not a business continuity event, ICT will follow the general guidelines below:

- Assess whether any additional threats could arise because of or in conjunction with the incident
- In consultation with the Human Resources Department and leadership, consider a debriefing session to discuss the incident with employees to help calm anxieties and dispel rumors about the incident
- Check in with affected employees by asking how they are doing and what they need – including connecting them with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), as needed
- Follow Human Resources and any agency procedures for reporting and filling out forms
- Evaluate the incident for gaps or deficiencies in emergency response plans

What should be done to recover after a violent situation or incident, including:

- Consult with human resources on employee leave options
- Consider continuity of operations actions to take and discuss with the Continuity Coordinator

After an incident, managers and supervisors should consult with senior leadership and other leaders for their expertise in returning to normal operations:

- **Communications:** Both internal and external communications may be impacted by an incident, and ongoing communications should be coordinated with communications, leadership, HR, legal, etc., the Governor's Office
- **Legal:** Witness statements or physical evidence may need to be collected, legal counsel should be consulted
- **Facilities:** Admin's Real-estate and Construction Services Division and Facilities Management Division (FMD) or third-party landlords should be involved if the physical workspace is impacted, if there are possible bloodborne pathogens or other biohazards that require proper cleaning, and if safety devices or other equipment requires maintenance or replacement. FMD will determine appropriate course of action based upon the situation.
- **Business Continuity:** An incident may trigger the activation of MSRS Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) plan

- **Human Resources:** Work with MSRS' Human Resources Department to address personnel or labor relations issues.
- **Employee Assistance Program:** If employees need services to address their general well-being, EAP is an excellent resource for options.
- **Safety:** Meet with appropriate staff/teams to discuss the incident and gather lessons learned.
- **ADA Coordinators/Affirmative Action:** Agency ADA coordinator should be involved to provide support to employees.

11.3 Employee Care

Once a threat has subsided and immediate safety and health concerns have been addressed, the attention of leadership, managers, supervisors, and Human Resources staff should turn to the well-being of employees. If an incident is severe enough to cause employees to leave the workplace, provide guidance on when and where work will resume. When appropriate, leadership may consider whether to submit the request for paid administrative leave to MMB.

The [Employee Assistance Program](#) EAP is a useful resource when communicating with and providing support to employees on a group or individual basis. Individuals respond differently to stressful situations and EAP is available to help navigate these dynamics. EAP and Organizational Health (OH) can help address the mental and emotional well-being of employees once all physical threats are resolved.

Contact:

Organizational Health
Phone: 651-259-3841 (voice mail)
Text "Hello" to 61295
Email: EAPWeb.MMB@state.mn.us

If EAP can't be reached soon enough, contact [LifeMatters](#) (24/7/365) 800-657-3719. LifeMatters will address immediate needs and coordinate as soon as possible with the Organizational Health internal staff.

11.4 After Action Review and Improvement Planning

MSRS conducts an After-Action Review and Improvement Planning, following the process documented in the Business Continuity of Operations Plan.

References

- [Emergency Response Plan](#)
- [Policies & Employment Law \(MERLIN\)](#)
- [MSRS Code of Conduct and Code of Ethics](#)
- [MMB HR/LR Policy #1329 – Sexual Harassment Prohibited](#)
- [MMB HR/LR Policy #1418 – Drug and Alcohol Use](#)
- [MMB HR/LR Policy #1432 – Respectful Workplace](#)
- [MMB HR/LR Policy #1436 – Harassment and Discrimination Prohibited](#)

Revisions

Version	Description of changes	Approved Date
1.0	Plan development	Unknown
2.0	Biennial review, update plan	08/22/2022
3.0	Review all sections and updated, including formatting changes and content changes. The project team reviewed MMB's documentation to ensure consistency when possible.	02/03/2026

Plan Approval

Plan Approval:

Signature on file

Erin Leonard
Executive Director

2/3/2026

Date