

**SANDUSKY COUNTY
PERSONNEL POLICY AND PROCEDURE MANUAL**

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

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- A. **Purpose:** Sandusky County is committed to providing its employees a work environment that is safe, secure and free of harassment, threats, intimidation and violence, in so far as it reasonably can do so within available resources. The County is further committed to ensuring the safety and security of clients, contractors, and the general public while on County property or other locations operated by the County. Sandusky County recognizes that workplace violence is a growing problem that should be addressed by all employers and therefore adopts this policy regarding workplace violence. Sandusky County will not tolerate acts of violence committed by or against County employees or members of the public while on property owned by Sandusky County or while performing County business at other locations. Therefore, each SCAA prohibits the following: any act or threat of violence, by an employee against another person's life, health, well-being or property; any act or threat of violence including, but not limited to, harassment, or coercion; any act or threat of violence which endangers the safety of employees, clients, contractors, or general public; any act or threat of violence made directly or indirectly by words, gestures, or symbols; use or possession of a weapon on County premises, on a County controlled site, or an area that is associated with County employment except as required in the line of duty (i.e., law enforcement).
- B. **Statement of Policy:** The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to employees of Sandusky County should they encounter a situation that they believe is or could result in an act of violence. Sandusky County will not tolerate any act of violence toward persons or property. All employees, clients, customers, and the general public shall be held accountable should they commit any act of violence in any County work location. Violations of any provision of this policy or employees found guilty of committing an act of violence may lead to administrative leave, fitness for duty evaluations, disciplinary

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action up to and including termination of employment and/or criminal prosecution. Non-employees will be dealt with in accordance with applicable law. Any person who makes substantial threats, threatening behavior or engages in violent acts while at any County work location, shall be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits and shall remain away from such premises pending the outcome of an investigation.

C. Definitions:

1. The word “violence” in this policy shall mean an act or behavior that:
 - a. is physically assaulted;
 - b. a reasonable person would perceive as obsessive (e.g., intensely focused on a grudge, grievance, or romantic interest in another person and likely to result in harm or threats of harm to persons or property);
 - c. consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to harm another individual or in any way endanger the safety of another;
 - d. would be interpreted by a reasonable person as carrying a potential for physical harm to the person;
 - e. a reasonable person would perceive as intimidating or menacing;
 - f. involves carrying or displaying weapons, destroying property, or throwing objects in a manner reasonably perceived to be threatening;
 - g. consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to destroy property.

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2. The word “work location” in this policy shall mean any location, permanent or temporary, where a County employee, or contractor performs any County work-related duty.
 3. The word “employee” in this policy shall mean any person subject to the Sandusky County Personnel Policy Manual under the authority of the Sandusky County Board of Commissioners or other offices and departments that have adopted the Sandusky County Personnel Policy Manual, including but not limited to classified employees, unclassified employees, contractual employees, members of any boards or commissions appointed by County officials or functioning on County property, volunteers working on behalf of the County or any elected or appointed Sandusky County Official.
- D. **Responsibility of Employer:** The General Duty Clause of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) has been interpreted to mean that the Employer has a legal obligation to provide a safe workplace.
- E. **Responsibility of Employee:** Employees are expected to treat people and property with respect. No employee is permitted to commit or threaten violence against any other employee, or member of the general public or the property of such persons. Employees shall immediately report any threats or incidents of workplace violence

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- F. **Supervisor Responsibilities:** Supervisors, Department Heads, and/or SCAA are responsible for assessing situations, making decisions on the appropriate response, and responding to reports of or knowledge of violent activities that have occurred in the workplace or that involves an employee of the County. Supervisors, Department Heads, and/or SCAA have a responsibility to assess prospective employees appropriately through prudent hiring practices (e.g., criminal records checks, reference checks, careful interviewing).
- G. **Dangerous Weapons:** The possession or use of dangerous weapons is prohibited on County property, in County vehicles, or in any personal vehicle which is used for County business or is parked on Employer property, except as hereinafter provided.
1. A dangerous weapon is defined as:
 - (a) A loaded or unloaded firearm; or
 - (b) A weapon, device, electronic stun weapon, chemical substance, or other material that in the manner it is used, or could ordinarily be used, or is intended to be used, is readily capable of causing serious bodily injury.
 2. **Exceptions:** Individuals may possess a firearm on County property if the individual is employed in the capacity of a law enforcement officer and is engaged in law enforcement activities. Employees who possess a valid permit to carry a firearm, if a firearm is brought on Employer property, must keep the firearm unloaded and in the employee's personal vehicle, which shall be locked.
- H. **Restraining Orders:** All employees who apply for, obtain, or are the subject of a restraining order which lists department locations as being protected areas, must provide to the SCAA and the Sandusky County Personnel Director a copy of the

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petition and declarations used to seek the order, a copy of any temporary protective or restraining order which is granted, and a copy of any protective or restraining order which is made permanent within three (3) working days following such action.

- I. **Reports of Violence:** It is a requirement that all employees report, in accordance with this policy, any behavior that compromises the Employer's ability to maintain a safe work environment. All reports will be investigated immediately and kept confidential, except where there is a legitimate need to know. Even without an actual threat, personnel should also report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent, when that behavior is job related or might be carried out on a County controlled site, or is associated with County employment. All incidences of suspected or potential violence should be reported to the employee's immediate supervisor, Department Head, or SCAA. Do not take the position that the incident is too minor to report or that it does not appear to be a "real problem." Do not wait until it is too late to be proactive.
- J. **Reaction of Complaints:** When any actual, potential, or suspected incident of violence is brought to the attention of a Supervisor, Department Head, or SCAA, they shall:
1. Evaluate the severity of the situation immediately while taking appropriate action to secure the safety and the security of the employees and the public.
 2. Have the individual reporting the incident fill out a Workplace Violence Incident Report Form. The supervisor, Department Head, and/or SCAA shall contact the Sandusky County Personnel Director at once. All reports shall be filed with the Sandusky County Personnel Director within twenty-four (24) hours of the incident.

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3. If it is concluded that an actual act of violence has occurred or if there is a likelihood that violence could result, the Supervisor, Department Head, or SCAA shall:
 - (a) Discuss the situation with the employee(s) and attempt to find out what caused the situation.
 - (b) Determine what action is to be taken to prevent the situation from occurring again. Such actions may include but not be limited to: assigning a different employee to the area or job; talking with the disgruntled client or employee(s); discussing the incident and offer suggestions for appropriate actions; referring the affected employee(s) to professional help or counseling; disciplining the employee(s), up to and including termination of employment.

- K. **Dissemination of Policy:** Each office or department of Sandusky County shall be responsible for reviewing said policy with each employee. Each employee must sign an acknowledgment form indicating the employee has received a copy of said policy. This acknowledgment form shall be kept in the employees personnel file.

- L. **New Employees:** The Sandusky County Personnel Department will give all new employees instruction on this policy as part of their orientation.