

City of Cohoes Workplace Violence Prevention Program

The City of Cohoes will not tolerate violence in the work place. All incidents, complaints, and or reports of violent behavior will be taken seriously. The City of Cohoes is committed to providing its employees with a reasonably safe and secure work environment.

Purpose of Program

Violence in the workplace is a leading cause of fatal and non-fatal occupational injury. The purpose of this program is to address potential workplace violence, prevent workplace violence from occurring to the fullest extent possible, and set forth procedures to be followed when such violence has occurred.

Violence, threats of violence, harassment, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior in the workplace will not be tolerated by the City of Cohoes. Examples of disruptive behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of harm. Such behavior will be taken seriously and will be appropriately addressed.

Scope of Program

All City of Cohoes employees are required to comply with this Program. In addition, since members of the public are required to conduct themselves in a nonviolent manner in conformity with existing law, employees who observe or experience visitors engaging in violent behavior should follow the procedures herein for the reporting of such behavior.

Violence and other disruptive behavior by or against any employee of the City of Cohoes or a member of the public in the workplace, including City Hall, the Police Department, Department of Public Works, the Water Plant, Fire Stations and Library, and any other location where the City of Cohoes business is conducted is unacceptable. Individuals who commit such acts may be removed from the premises and may be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and/or criminal prosecution.

Training

All Department Heads must ensure that employees of their particular department are informed of the requirements of the law, the risk factors in their workplace, and the location of the written workplace violence prevention program. The training shall include measures that employees can take to protect themselves from violence and the details of the written workplace violence prevention program. Employee workplace violence training is to be provided at least annually.

Reporting of Violence

Any City of Cohoes employee, upon becoming aware of an instance of physical assault, threatening behavior, or verbal abuse occurring in the work setting, must immediately report the

facts and circumstances of said incident to his/her department head. In the event that an employee observes or experiences violent behavior which the employee believes represents an immediate threat to their safety or the safety of others or where an injury has occurred, the employee must immediately obtain police and medical assistance. Such an employee should also notify their department head.

The department head shall also conduct a preliminary inquiry into the facts and circumstances of the incident and make a prompt report to the Mayor.

The Mayor, or his designee, will determine if there is:

1. An immediate threat of violence. If so, the Mayor or his designee will ensure police and emergency medical personnel have been notified and thereafter follow the procedures outline below.
2. Potential serious misconduct or criminal behavior by an employee. If so, the Mayor or his designee shall immediately notify the City of Cohoes Police.

In all instances, a written summary report of the incident and all action taken must be prepared.

Retaliation against an employee who makes a good faith report of violence or other disruptive behavior is strictly prohibited.

Workplace Risk Evaluation

Certain factors or situations may place employees at a greater risk of workplace violence. This workplace risk evaluation is based upon evaluations of City of Cohoes owned, leased and operated facilities conducted by the City of Cohoes representatives and appropriate union leaders and the review of occupational injury and illness logs and incident reports.

Workplace violence can occur in any work place setting. However, some settings or factors may pose a greater degree of workplace violence risk. Employment situations or factors that may pose higher risks for City of Cohoes employees include, but are not limited to:

- Working late night or early morning hours
- Exchanging money with the public
- Working alone or in small numbers
- Working in a setting with uncontrolled access to the workplace
- Having a mobile workplace assignment
- Working in locations with uncontrolled public access
- Working in locations without security personnel

- Working in locations without adequate lighting outside
- Working in locations without video monitoring
- Performing duties which require direct interaction with criminal behavior
- Performing duties which require interaction with the individuals in their homes

Prevention

Workplace violence is a potential problem in the modern workplace. Workplace violence requires a multifaceted approach by the employer and employees providing support to mitigate the occurrences and effects of violence in the workplace.

Early Warning Signs of Potential Violence

Past behavior has often been a predictor of future behavior.

A list of indicators of increased risk of violent behavior may include:

- Direct or veiled threats of harm
- Intimidation, belligerence, bullying or other inappropriate behavior directed at others
- Numerous conflicts with supervisors and employees; verbal comments indicating expressions of hostility directed at coworkers, supervisor, or others
- Bringing an unauthorized weapon to work or making inappropriate reference to guns or fascination with weapons
- Statements indicating approval of the use of violence to resolve a problem or statements indicating identification with perpetrators of workplace homicides
- Statements indicating an increased tone of desperation from the person
- Signs of abuse of drugs/alcohol on or off the job
- Extreme or uncharacteristic changes in behavior or displays of emotion
- Employees with ongoing domestic difficulties
- Employees with a temporary or permanent order of protection

These behaviors should be reported to an employee's department head.

Response Procedures

Introduction

The following procedures are recommended to be followed whenever an employee files a complaint alleging that a violation of the City of Cohoes Workplace Violence Program has occurred or when a violent incident occurs.

Non-Emergency and Emergency (threatening) Situations

A “threatening situation” is a situation where one person, through intimidating words or gestures has induced fear and apprehension of physical or other harm in another person but there is no immediate danger of such harm being inflicted. The steps listed under the “Non-Emergency (threatening) Response Procedure” are recommended to be followed whenever a threatening situation occurs.

A situation is an “emergency” if an injury has occurred or there is an immediate threat of physical harm. Individuals should always consider their personal safety first in all emergency situations. The “Emergency Response Procedure” should be followed whenever an emergency occurs.

Response Procedures

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| Non-Emergency (threatening) Response Procedure A Threatening situation is defined as a situation where: One person, through intimidation words or gestures has induced fear and apprehension of physical or other harm in another person but there is no immediate danger of such harm being inflicted. | Emergency Response Procedure A situation is an emergency if: 1) An injury has occurred; or 2) There is an immediate threat of physical harm. You should consider your personal safety first in all emergency situations. If possible you should use the following response procedure. |
| Step 1 Employee immediately notifies department head. | Step 1 First person on the scene quickly assesses the situation and risk. |
| Step 2 Department head conducts preliminary inquiry and makes prompt report to Mayor. | Step 2 First person on the scene calls for police and/or medical assistance and ensures needs of injured are met. Employee must also immediately notify department head of the situation |
| Step 3 If there has been serious misconduct or criminal behavior by a City of Cohoes employee, the Mayor or his designee will contact City Police. | Step 3 Department head will immediately assess whether there is an emergency situation and make prompt report to Mayor. |

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| <p>Or Step 3A If there is no immediate threat of violence nor any serious misconduct or criminal behavior by a City of Cohoes employee, the Mayor or his designee will continue investigation, resolve/mediate matter and initiate disciplinary action.</p> | <p>Step 4 Mayor or his designee will ensure the Police and medical personnel have been notified.</p> |
| <p>Step 4 Mayor or his designee will prepare a written report of the incident.</p> | <p>Step 5 Proceed with Non-Emergency Response Procedures, Steps 3-5</p> |
| <p>Step 5 If an emergency situation develops, follow steps for emergency response procedure.</p> | |

City of Cohoes

Workplace Violence Incident Report

1. Date of Incident: _____

2. Time of day when incident occurred: _____

3. Workplace location where incident occurred:

4. Provide a detailed description of incident below.

Note: If the case is a “privacy concern case”, remove the name of the employee who was the victim of the workplace violence and enter “PRIVACY CONCERN CASE” in the space normally used for the employee’s name. Privacy concern cases include cases involving:

- Injury or illness to an intimate body part or the reproductive system;
- Injury or illness resulting from sexual assault;
- Mental illness;
- HIV infection;
- Needle stick injuries and cuts from sharp objects that are or may be contaminated with another person’s blood or other potentially infectious material;
- Other injuries or illnesses, if the employee independently and voluntarily requests that his or her name not be entered on the report.

Description (including the following):

- Name of employee reporting the incident (unless a “privacy concern case”);
- Names and job titles of involved employees
- Names or other identifier of other individuals involved;
- Nature and extent of injuries arising from the incident;
- Names of witnesses; and
- Events leading up to the incident and how the incident ended.

Please use additional paper if necessary