

CHAPTER 21: WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

21-1. Purpose

The Village of Royal Palm Beach is committed to maintaining a safe and secure working environment where employees and customers are free from the threat of workplace violence.

The Village has adopted a zero tolerance policy for assaults, threats, threatening behavior or acts of violence committed by or against its employees or anyone on Village property. Violations of this policy will lead to disciplinary action up to and including discharge, arrest, and prosecution.

Any person who makes substantial threats, exhibits threatening behavior or engages in violent acts on Village property will be removed from the premises as quickly as safety permits, and will remain off Village property pending the outcome of an investigation. The Village will initiate an appropriate response which may include but is not limited to disciplinary action up to and including suspension, discharge as well as possible criminal charges of the person(s) involved. The Village will work with law enforcement agencies to prosecute anyone outside the Village who commits violent acts against employees. No existing Village policy, procedure or practice should be interpreted to prohibit decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring or a life threatening situation from developing.

It is the shared obligation of all employees to individually and jointly act to prevent or defuse actual or implied violent behavior at work. Unauthorized possession, use or threat of use of weapons or firearms are not permitted at work or on Village property including a Village vehicle, unless such possession or use of weapon is required, necessary and an approved requirement of the job.

21-2. Standards of Conduct

Employee's conduct toward co-workers, managers, supervisors and the public must be positive, respectful and appropriate to the work environment. The following behaviors are always prohibited. This following list is illustrative and is not all inclusive:

1. Threatening, intimidating, coercing, harassing or assaulting an employee or customer.
2. Engaging in horseplay, fighting, violence or any other action interfering with the work of other employees or service to the public.
3. Using threats or profane or abusive language in dealing with the public, co-workers, supervisors, or other persons in work relationships, or otherwise provoking or abusing others in any way.
4. The unauthorized possession, use or threatened use of weapons or firearms while on duty.
5. Harassing, terrorizing, threatening with physical violence or punishment, or otherwise forcing an employee to suffer embarrassing or degrading experiences.

21-3. Definitions

- A. Assaulted Employee: Any employee who is reasonably put in fear of being imminently struck by another employee or anyone on Village property, either by a menacing gesture, sudden move alone, or accompanied by a threat.
- B. Battered Employee: Any employee who experiences actual physical contact from another employee, or anyone on Village property (whether or not a physical injury occurred).

21-4. Procedures

- A. Any employee, supervisor, or department head who has been threatened, is the victim of a threat or violent act, witnesses any threats or violent acts, or learns of any threats or violent acts at work is to immediately report the facts of the incident to his/her supervisor or department head, and or the Human Resource Department. In any immediate emergency situation, an employee should call 911 and report as many details as possible, and then report the incident to his/her supervisor or department head.
- B. Department heads and supervisors are required to immediately report any conduct that they have knowledge which might constitute a violation of this policy to the Human Resource Department.
- C. An in-depth investigation of all reported incidents will be conducted, as well as ongoing attempts by department heads and supervisors to stop actual or potential violent situation on Village property as quickly as possible and prevent any escalation that could threaten others on Village property. Based upon the outcome of the investigation, the Village Manager will determine what follow up actions are appropriate, including a request for intervention by law enforcement agencies.
- D. In the event the persons alleged to have committed the threatening or violent act is in the reporting employee's chain of command, the reporting employee may report the incident to the department head. In the event the allegation involved the department head, the employee may report the allegations directly to the Village Manager.
- E. In determining whether the alleged conduct constitutes workplace violence, the department head, Human Resource Department, and or Village Manager will look at the record as a whole. Circumstances of the particular employment relationship, job performance record and job functions performed by the individual(s) will be examined.
- F. If an employee experiences actual physical contact from another employee, or anyone on Village property, if needed, the battered employee may report to the Village's medical health care provider for evaluation and treatment of any possible injuries. Any such

employee should report for an evaluation regardless of whether an injury has actually occurred. The Human Resources Department will arrange the evaluation with the Village's medical health care provider.

- G. Any employee who engages in any threatening or violent behavior must be referred to the Village's Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

21-5. Enforcement Provisions

Employees who engage in prohibited behavior in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge from employment. The Village will promptly investigate all complaints of retaliation. If after investigating any complaint the Village determines that an employee has knowingly provided false information or filed a false complaint or report, disciplinary action against the employee will be taken up to and including discharge from employment.

Information about that incident or threat will be disclosed on a need to know basis, and in compliance with federal, state, and local laws so that a fair and thorough investigation can be conducted and or appropriate corrective action can be taken.

Questions concerning the application of this policy should be directed to the Human Resources Department.