

**SCHUYLER COUNTY
WORK PLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY**

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I. Policy Statement

Schuyler County is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all of its employees. We recognize that the potential for workplace violence represents a serious occupational safety hazard for workers. Therefore, Schuyler County has developed and shall implement the following workplace violence prevention program.

II. Policy Objective

Schuyler County prohibits workplace violence. Violence, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment, coercion, or other threatening behavior towards people or property will not be tolerated. Complaints involving workplace violence will not be ignored and will be given the serious attention they deserve. Individuals who violate this policy may be removed from County property and employees may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, consistent with County policies, rules and collective bargaining agreements, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities for criminal prosecution. The County, at the request of an employee, or at its own discretion, may prohibit members of the public, including family members, from seeing an employee on County property unless necessary to transact County-related business. This policy particularly applies in cases where the employee suspects that an act of violence will result from an encounter with said individual(s).

The full version of the Schuyler County Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement is attached hereto as Appendix A.

III. Scope

All County employees, elected County Officials, vendors, contractors, consultants, and others, who do business with the County, whether in a County facility or where official County business is conducted, are covered by this policy. This policy also applies to other persons not affiliated with the County, such as former employees and visitors. When employees have complaints about other employees, they should contact their immediate supervisor. If the complaint involves their immediate supervisor they should contact their department head or the County's Human Resources Department.

IV. Definitions

1. Workplace violence is any physical assault, threatening behavior, verbal abuse occurring where the public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment.¹

Examples of workplace violence include, but are not limited to:

- Disruptive behavior intended to disturb, interfere with or prevent normal work activities (such as yelling, using profanity, verbally abusing others, or waving arms and fists).
- Intentional physical contact for the purpose of causing harm (such as slapping, stabbing, punching, striking, shoving, or other physical attack).
- Menacing or threatening behavior (such as throwing objects, pounding on a desk or door, damaging property, stalking, or otherwise acting aggressively; or making oral or written statements specifically intended to frighten, coerce, or threaten) where a reasonable person would interpret such behavior as constituting evidence of intent to cause harm to individuals or property.
- Possessing firearms, imitation firearms, knives or other dangerous weapons, instruments or materials shall be covered under County Policy 7.10.

V. Reporting of incidents

1. General Reporting Responsibilities

Incidents of workplace violence, threats of workplace violence, or observations of workplace violence are not to be ignored by any County employee. Workplace violence should promptly be reported to supervisors verbally as well as completing the Incident Report Form, Appendix B. Additionally, County employees are encouraged to report behavior that they reasonably believe poses a potential for workplace violence as defined in Section IV. It is important that all employees take this responsibility seriously to effectively maintain a safe working environment.

¹ 12 NYCRR Part 800.16

2. Imminent or Actual Violence

Any person experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury should call 911 immediately.

3. Commitment of a Crime

All individuals who believe a crime has been committed against them have the right, and are encouraged, to report the incident to the appropriate law enforcement agency.

4. False Reports

Employees and elected officials who make false and malicious complaints of workplace violence, as opposed to complaints which, even if erroneous, are made in good faith, will be subject to disciplinary action and/or referral to law enforcement authorities as appropriate.

VI Responsibilities

1. Elected Officials and Department Heads

Elected Officials and Department Heads shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy. The responsibility includes dissemination of this policy to all employees, ensuring appropriate investigation and follow-up of all alleged incidents of workplace violence, and ensuring that all administrators and supervisors are aware of their responsibilities under this policy through internal communications and training.

2. Supervisors

Each employee designated with supervisory responsibility (hereinafter “supervisor”) is responsible within his/her area of jurisdiction for the implementation of this policy. Supervisors must report any complaint of workplace violence made to him/her and any other incidents of workplace violence of which he/she becomes aware or reasonably believes to exist. Supervisors are expected to inform their immediate supervisor promptly about any complaints, acts, or threats of violence even if the situation has been addressed and resolved. After having reported such complaint the supervisor should keep it confidential and not disclose it further, except as necessary during the investigation process and/or subsequent proceedings.

Supervisors are required to call 911 immediately in the event of imminent or actual violence involving weapons or potential physical injuries.

3. Employees

Employees must report workplace violence, as defined above, to their supervisor. Employees who are advised that a workplace violence incident has occurred or has been observed must report this to their supervisor immediately. Recurring or persistent workplace violence that an employee reasonably believes is not being addressed

satisfactorily, or violence that is, or has been, engaged in by the employee's supervisor should be brought to the attention of the department head.

Employees who have obtained Orders of Protection are expected to notify their supervisor and provide a list of locations which are designated as protected areas.

Victims of domestic violence who believe the violence may extend into the workplace, or employees who believe that domestic or other personal matters may result in their being subject to violence extending into the workplace, are encouraged to notify their supervisor. Confidentiality will be maintained to the fullest extent possible.

Upon hiring, and annually thereafter, employees will have copies of this policy made available to them. Additionally, the policy will be posted throughout County buildings and be placed on the County's web page, as appropriate.

4. County Safety Committee

The County Safety Officer is responsible to insure that new employees or transferred employees have a copy of the Workplace Violence Policy and Program made available to them and also insuring County employees receive appropriate training. The County Safety Committee will also be responsible for annually disseminating this policy to County personnel, as well as posting the policy appropriately throughout county buildings and other work sites.

The County Safety Committee will assist the County in responding to workplace violence; facilitating appropriate responses to reported incidents of workplace violence; assessing the potential problem of workplace violence at its sites; assessing the County's readiness for dealing with workplace violence; evaluating incidents to prevent future occurrences; and utilizing prevention, intervention, and interviewing techniques in responding to workplace violence. This Committee will also develop workplace violence prevention tools (such as pamphlets, guidelines and handbooks) to further assist in recognizing and preventing workplace violence at County buildings and work sites.

VII. Education

The County is responsible for the dissemination and enforcement of this policy as described herein, as well as providing opportunities for training in the prevention and awareness of workplace violence. The County Safety Committee, department heads and elected officials are responsible to assist in identifying available training opportunities, as well as other resources and tools, (such as reference materials detailing workplace violence warning signs) that can be incorporated into County prevention materials for dissemination to County Employees.

VIII. Confidentiality

The County shall maintain the confidentiality of investigations of workplace violence to the fullest extent possible. The County will act on the basis of anonymous complaints where it has a reasonable basis to believe that there has been a violation of this policy and that the safety and well being of County employees would be served by such action.

IX. Retaliation

Retaliation against anyone acting in good faith who has made a complaint of workplace violence, who has reported witnessing workplace violence, or who has been involved in reporting, investigating, or responding to workplace violence is a violation of this policy. Those found responsible for retaliatory action may be subject to discipline up to and including termination, and referral to law enforcement in aggravated circumstances.

APPENDIX A

SCHUYLER COUNTY
Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement

Schuyler County is committed to the safety and security of our employees. Workplace violence presents a serious occupational safety hazard to our staff. Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, guests, or other individuals by anyone on Schuyler County property will be thoroughly investigated and appropriate action will be taken, including summoning criminal justice authorities when warranted. All employees are responsible for helping to create an environment of mutual respect for each other as well as clients, following all policies, procedures and program requirements, and for assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

This policy is designed to meet the requirements of NYS Labor Law 27b and highlights some of the elements that are found within our Workplace Violence Prevention Program. The process involved in complying with this law included a workplace evaluation that was designed to identify the workplace violence hazards to which our employees could be exposed. Other tools that were utilized during this process included involving the County's Safety Committee, surveying all county employees for their input, and a physical assessment of all County-owned property. All employees will participate in the annual Workplace Violence Prevention Training Program.

The goal of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of all people in our workplace. All incidents of violence or threatening behavior will be responded to immediately upon notification. If appropriate, the County's Employee Assistance Program will provide counseling services or referrals for employees.

All Schuyler County personnel are responsible for notifying the contact person designated below of any violent incidents, threatening behavior, including threats they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received.

Designated Contact Person:

Name: Lorry Johnson

Title: Personnel Officer

Department: Human Resources

Phone: (607) 535-8179

Location: County Office Building, 105 9th Street, Watkins Glen, NY (2nd Floor)