

Town of New Paltz Workplace Violence Prevention Policy Statement

The Town of New Paltz has a zero tolerance violence policy and considers the safety and security of its employees to be a priority. Therefore, threats, threatening behavior, acts of violence and any related conduct including, but not limited to, physical violence, verbal or written threats or intimidation, intimidating gestures or actions, and violence against property will not be tolerated.

Any person who makes threats, exhibits threatening behavior, or engages in violent acts on Town property may be removed from the premises pending the outcome of an investigation. Threats, threatening behaviors, or other acts of violence executed off Town property that are directed at employees are also in violation of this policy. Off-site threats include, but are not limited to, threats made via the telephone, fax, electronic or conventional mail, or any other form of communication.

This policy statement is designed to meet the requirements of the NYS Labor Law 27(b) and highlights some of the elements of the Town's Workplace Violence Prevention Program. The process involved in developing the Program included a workplace evaluation to identify workplace hazards that Town employees could be exposed to. The Program has been developed and implemented with the assistance of Authorized Employee Representative(s). The Authorized Employee Representative(s) have participated in the surveys and will be involved in annual review of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program as well as review at least annually of the Workplace Violence Incident Reports to identify trends in the types of incidents in the workplace and review of the effectiveness of the mitigating actions taken.

Employees found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The Town's response to any incident of violence may include suspension and/or termination of any business relationship, reassignment of job duties, suspension or termination of employment and criminal prosecution of those involved.

The Town of New Paltz employees are responsible for notifying the contact person designated below of any threats they have witnessed, received or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Employees should also report behavior they regard as threatening of violence if that behavior is work-related or might be carried out on a work-site.

Designated Contact Person

Name: Neil Bettez

Title: Supervisor

Phone: 845-255-0604

Location: Town Hall, 52 Clearwater Road

The Town of New Paltz Workplace Violence Prevention Program can be obtained by contacting the Payroll Office at Town Hall.

TOWN OF NEW PALTZ WORKPLACE VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM

The Town of New Paltz is committed to provide a work environment free from the hazards of workplace or any physical assault, threatening behavior or verbal abuse. This program establishes a zero tolerance to violence in the work place. It also establishes responsibilities for employees and visitors to the Town's buildings.

Any acts of violence occurring where an employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment will not be tolerated. Offenders may be removed from the premises and be subject to appropriate disciplinary actions as further described in applicable policies, collective bargaining agreements and Civil Service laws, rules and regulations.

The program is intended to ensure that all Town employees including supervisors and department heads comply with work practices that are designed to make the workplace more secure. Management will demonstrate a clear commitment during the implementation and enforcement of this Workplace Violence Prevention Program. This program has been developed and implemented with the assistance of authorized representatives. The authorized employee representatives have participated in the site surveys and will be involved in the annual program review. Authorized employee representatives are encouraged to provide input with regard to the content of this program.

A copy of the Town's Workplace Violence Prevention Policy may be obtained by contacting the Payroll office at Town Hall.

What is Workplace Violence?

New York State Public Employer Workplace Violence Prevention Code Rule 827 defines Workplace Violence as any physical assault, threatening behavior, verbal abuse occurring where a public employee performs any work-related duty in the course of his or her employment.

A reportable workplace violence incident is defined as one or more of the following.

1. An attempt or threat whether verbal or physical to inflict injury upon a person.
2. Any intentional display of force which would give a person reason or fear to expect bodily harm.
3. Intentional and wrongful physical contact with a person without his/her consent that entails some injury or offensive touching.
4. Harassment of a nature that would give a person reason to fear escalation or make it difficult to pursue a normal work life or private life when harassment arises out of or in the course of employment.
5. Stalking a person with the intent of causing fear when such stalking has arisen through or in the course of employment. An incident may be committed without one person actually touching or striking or doing bodily harm to another person.

Risk Evaluation Survey

As an initial component of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program a risk evaluation survey was conducted with the assistance of authorized employee representatives. Where risk factors were identified at each work site, corrective action will be implemented to prevent or minimize the risk of work place violence. Where risk factors cannot be completely eliminated, the town will use a hierarchy of controls to reduce the risk to employees. The hierarchy of controls includes:

- . Engineering controls-to reduce the hazard through substitution or design;
- . Work practice controls-to reduce the hazard by changing organizational policies and/or procedures; and
- . Personal protective equipment where appropriate and applicable.

Work site safety evaluation has been and is an ongoing process in The Town of New Paltz. Risk factors and recommended mitigation is attached.

Communication and Employer Commitment

In the Town of New Paltz, we recognize that to maintain a safe, healthy, and secure workplace we must have open, two-way communication between all employees, including supervisors and department heads, on all workplace safety, health and security issues.

The Town has a communication system designed to encourage a continuous flow of safety, health and security information between management and our employees without fear of reprisal and in a form that is readily understandable. Examples of our communication methods include;

1. Initial training of new hires and per diem employees along with annual training.
2. Reinforcing a zero tolerance approach to workplace violence through the use of training, signs and posters.
3. Informing employees, supervisors and department heads of our program for workplace security.
4. Develop an evaluation of the performances of all employees in complying with established security measures.
5. Recognition of employees who perform work practices which promote security in the workplace.
6. Ensure annual training is provided to all employees to increase their understanding and compliance with methods of reporting incidents.
7. A progressive discipline procedure per bargaining unit contracts for employees to comply with workplace security practices.

Employee Training

The cornerstone of an effective workplace violence prevention plan is appropriate training of all employees, supervisors and department heads. The Town of New Paltz will educate its employees about the risk factors associated with the various types of workplace violence and provide appropriate training in crime awareness, assault and rape prevention and defusing hostile situations.

The mandatory training will be provided during the general new employee orientation, reassignments and annually for all employees. The following topics will be discussed during the initial and annual training.

1. What is Workplace Violence
2. Management's commitment to zero tolerance of workplace violence
3. Techniques on how to recognize and avoid workplace violence situations
4. What are high risk occupations
5. The importance of reporting all incidents
6. How and when incidents will be investigated by the employer
7. Where employees can go for assistance
8. Where to obtain post incident crisis counseling

Incident Reporting

The goal of this policy is to promote the safety and well-being of all people in our workplace. Employees are often in the best position in the workplace to observe behavior that may indicate that an individual is being threatened.

Incidents of workplace violence, including threats of workplace violence or observation of workplace violence, should be promptly reported to a supervisor or Department Head, as well as completing and filing a Workplace Violence Incident Report Form with the Designated Contact Person listed below:

Designated Contact Person

Name: Neil Bettez

Title: Supervisor

Phone: 845-255-0604

Location: Town Hall, 52 Clearwater Road

Employees are encouraged to report any incidents that may involve a violation of any Town policy that is designed to provide a safe working environment. Concerns may be reported to your supervisor or department head.

Any imminent threat or act of violence that is considered by the employee to be an immediate danger to life and health should be reported to law enforcement by dialing 911.

Any potentially dangerous situations must be reported immediately to a supervisor or department head in the absence of a supervisor. When reporting a threat of violence,

the employee should be as specific and detailed as possible. The supervisor will conduct swift and thorough investigation of all workplace violence complaints.

An employee may be required to make a written report of an incident. Reports or incidents warranting confidentiality will be handled appropriately and information will be disclosed to others on a need to know basis in the judgment of the town. All parties involved in a situation will be counseled and the results of investigations will be discussed with them. The Town of New Paltz will actively intervene at any indication of a possible hostile or violent situation. Employees are expected to exercise sound judgment and to inform a supervisor or department head if any employee exhibits behavior, which could be a sign of a potentially dangerous situation.

This includes threats by employees, as well as threats by clients, vendors, solicitors or other members of the public. Such behaviors include, but are not limited to:

1. Discussing weapons or bringing them to the workplace.
2. Displaying overt signs of extreme stress, resentment, hostility or anger.
3. Making threatening remarks.
4. Sudden or significant deterioration of performance.
5. Displaying irrational or inappropriate behavior.

All Department heads and supervisors are responsible for implementing and maintaining this program in their work areas. They should be familiar with the contents of this program and be able to answer questions relating to the Town of New Paltz Violence Prevention Policy.

Employees or employee representatives who believe that a serious violation of the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy exists should follow the proper chain of command by reporting their concern immediately in writing to their supervisor, in the absence of the supervisor, the department head.

Post-Incident Response

Post-incident response and evaluation are important parts of an effective Workplace Violence Prevention Program. The Town of New Paltz is committed to the following:

1. Assuring that all injured employees receive prompt and appropriate medical care.
2. Securing the premises to safeguard evidence and reduce distractions during the post incident.
3. Reporting the incident to the appropriate authorities as required by applicable laws and regulations.
4. Prepare an incident report immediately after the incident utilizing the Incident Report form.
5. Conducting post-incident debriefings and counseling.
6. After the occurrence of a workplace violence incident conduct a review of the workplace violence prevention plans.
7. An employee reporting an incident of workplace violence on the appropriate form will be advised upon receipt of the form that an appropriate investigation will be commenced.
8. During the investigative process the employee will be advised of the progress of said investigation no less than on a monthly basis.

9. Upon completion of the investigation, the employee making the report of workplace violence and the appropriate department head will be advised, in writing, the result of the investigation.

Restraining and Protective Orders

An employee who applies for or obtains a protective or restraining order that lists the Town of New Paltz as protected areas must provide a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order and a copy of any temporary or permanent protective or restraining order that was granted. The Town of New Paltz has confidentiality procedures that recognize and respect the privacy of the reporting employee(s).

Responsibilities of Employees and Supervisors

Employees

1. Be familiar with the Town of New Paltz Workplace Violence Prevention Policy & Program.
2. Do not carry any weapons to work.
3. Advise supervisor of any orders of protection or other necessary precautions that apply to the workplace.

Emergency Situation (act of violence or imminent threat)

1. Immediately contact Local Law Enforcement at 911.
2. Use any available panic buttons.
3. Get away from the situation.
4. Promptly notify your supervisor.

Non-emergency Situation

1. Promptly report all violence, threats, intimidation or other disruptive behavior to your supervisor.
2. Notify supervisor of any safety or security concerns at the worksite or in the field.

Supervisor

1. Be familiar with the Town of New Paltz Workplace Violence Prevention Policy & Program.
2. Do not carry any weapons to work.
3. Advise department head of any orders of protection or other necessary precautions that apply to the workplace.

Emergency Situation (act of violence or imminent threat)

1. Immediately contact Local Law Enforcement at 911.
2. Use any available panic buttons.
3. Get away from the situation.
4. Promptly notify your supervisor.

Non-emergency Situation

1. Promptly report all violence, threats, intimidation or other disruptive behavior to your supervisor.
2. Notify supervisor of any safety or security concerns at the worksite or in the field.

Insure new hires receive Workplace Violence Training.

Record Keeping

It is important to the success of the Workplace Violence Prevention Program that all employees understand the importance of reporting all incidents to the employer. The Town of New Paltz will use records of injuries, illnesses, incidents, hazards, corrective actions and training to help identify problems and solutions for a safe and helpful workplace.

The outline in 12 NYCRR Part 801, Recording and Reporting Public Employees Occupational Injuries will be utilized for logging employee injuries or illnesses relating to workplace violence. A report must be made if two or more employees are hospitalized. Any employee fatality must be reported to the nearest PESH Office.

No Retaliation

The Town of New Paltz as an employer will not retaliate against any employee who has;

1. Reported an alleged serious violation to a supervisor
2. Requested an inspection by the NYS Department of Labor officials
3. Accompanied the NYS Department of Labor official during an inspection

In addition, it is the responsibility of the Town of New Paltz to take the appropriate disciplinary action against any employee who actions are retaliatory in nature.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____