

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy HR-21 Workplace Violence

SUBJECT: Workplace Violence

PURPOSE: Sam Houston State University (University) encourages and works to provide a workplace and educational environment free from violence.

POLICY: The University is concerned and committed to providing safety for students, employees, and visitors. We refuse to tolerate violence in the workplace, classrooms, or activities and will make every effort to prevent violent incidents from occurring. This policy applies to all students, faculty, staff, visitors, volunteers, vendors, and contractors on the university premise at university-sponsored events. All personnel actions are reviewed to ensure Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance.

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1. Responsibility

- a. All employees, including supervisors and managers, must adhere to work practices designed to make the workplace more secure and must not engage in verbal threats or take physical actions which create a security hazard for others in the workplace.
- b. All employees, including supervisors and managers, are responsible for using safe work practices, for following directives, policies, and procedures, and assisting in maintaining a safe and secure work environment.

2. Definition

- a. Workplace violence is any physical or non-physical act that results in threatened or physical harm to a person or threatened or actual damage to property. It includes any threatening words or actions whether verbal or non-verbal which create in the mind of any reasonable person the belief of receiving immediate or future harm to any person or property.
- b. Examples of what would normally be considered workplace violence includes, but are not limited to the following occurring in the work setting:
 - any physical assault and/or battery
 - intimidating, threatening, or hostile statements, actions, or gestures
 - verbal threats or abuse
 - obscene and/or harassing phone calls
 - Sending threatening, intimidating letters, notes, emails, or other forms of written or electronic communication
 - stalking
 - bomb threats
 - unlawful possession of a weapon

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- threatening comments regarding, or reference to, violent events and/or behavior, vandalism, arson, or sabotage
- throwing objects and things regardless of whether or not a person is a target
- intentional damaging or destruction or sabotage of University property or equipment or another's property or equipment or any substantial threat to destroy property or equipment
- any behavior or actions that would be interpreted by a reasonable person as carrying a potential for violence and/or acts of aggression.

3. Enforcement of Policy Violations

- a. Employees who commit threatening or violent acts may be removed from the workplace and may be subject to disciplinary action including termination, criminal prosecution, or both.
- b. Any disciplinary action initiated as a result of a workplace violence incident is not appealable.

4. Preventative Measures

- a. By taking preventative measures supervisors, managers, and employees can reduce the risk of workplace violence.
- b. Examples of preventative measures are as follows:
 - inform employees that there is zero tolerance for workplace violence
 - encourage employees to report incidents
 - evaluate the departmental employee selection process
 - communicate work safety with employees on a regular basis
 - establish a professional work environment
 - examine security as well as emergency procedures
 - be familiar with the work location and any crime problems in or near the area
 - lock all doors, even for brief periods
 - know your neighbors; know who works at what time and who can be of help during emergencies
 - be especially careful when going to your car
 - be cautious of suspicious persons entering your work area
 - never get into an elevator if you are uncomfortable with a person in the elevator
- c. Criminal Trespass Warning – Can be issued and reviewed at the discretion of the University Police Department. For more information, please contact UPD at (936) 294-1800.

5. Workplace Violence Responsive Actions

Workplace violence generally falls into three levels. The specific response depends upon the applicable category. The suggested actions by category are:

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Examples of Violent Behaviors	Action Steps
<p>Level 1 Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of weapons, including items that may be used as a weapon • Threats of bodily harm • Hostage situations • Physical assaults • Bomb threats • Temporary restraining order violations • Property damage • Suicide • Stalking 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call 911 immediately 2. Call the University Police Department (4-1000) 3. Bomb Threats – An individual who receives a call of a bomb threat should obtain as much information as possible from the caller. 4. Report to iWatchTexas at www.iwatchtx.org, or by calling 844-643-2251
<p>Level 2 Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatening Messages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Emails ○ U.S. Mail ○ Phone calls ○ Text or social media ○ Fax • Verbal threats 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call the University Police Department (4-1000) 2. Call Human Resources (4-2637) ask for Employee Relations 3. Report to iWatchTexas at www.iwatchtx.org, or by calling 844-643-2251
<p>Level 3 Behaviors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intimidation • Intentional work interference • Sabotage • Repeated behavior that causes distress in a reasonable person 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Call Human Resources (4-2637) ask for Employee Relations 2. Report to iWatchTexas at www.iwatchtx.org, or by calling 844-643-2251
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indicators of harm to self or others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Remove the employee to a private room to calm and reassure 2. Call the University Police Department (4-1000) 3. Call Human Resources (4-2637) ask for Employee Relations 4. Report to iWatchTexas at www.iwatchtx.org, or by calling 844-643-2251

Supervisors must provide written documentation of circumstances associated with the event that includes a report of information from all involved employees and witnesses. Further, the supervisor will coordinate any employee action with Human Resources Employee Relations personnel.

Employees have the right to anonymously report instances of workplace violence or suspicious activity by contacting the Department of Public Safety (DPS) through the iWatchTexas Community Reporting System at www.iwatchtx.org, or by calling 844-643-2251.

6. General Provisions

- a. Retaliation Prohibited – Under no circumstances will the University permit retaliation against an individual in any way who in good faith reports a potential violation of this policy, cooperates

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with an investigation regarding any matter covered by this policy, or who reports, in good faith, an incident of abuse or other warning signs.

- b. Employee Assistance Program – Employees and family members may contact the [Employee Assistance Program](#) for any personal concerns related to violence or aggressive behavior.
- c. Sexual Misconduct – Allegations of sexual misconduct or harassment are not governed by this policy and shall instead be addressed in the TSUS Sexual Misconduct Police and Procedures. Employees may bring other complaints of a discriminatory nature under the University's [Non-Discrimination Policy PRE-29](#).

Review by: Rhonda Beassie, Associate Vice President for People and Procurement Operations, March, 2024