

# **POLICY ON WORKPLACE THREATS AND VIOLENCE**

**Effective December 14, 2010**

## **Zero Tolerance Policy**

The Town of East Hartford will not tolerate acts or threats of violence, the possession, carrying, brandishing or use of weapons and/or dangerous instruments, and/or the threatened or actual destruction, damage or theft of property, in our workplace by employees, the general public, or anyone who conducts business with the Town.

## **Definitions**

The following definitions apply for purposes of this Policy:

- “*Act of Violence*” means aggressive or unwanted physical contact between individuals, including but not limited to pushing, shoving, punching, striking, pinching, biting, kicking, spitting, throwing objects, wrestling and slapping.
- “*Threat of Violence*” means a threat of immediate or future harm made seriously or in jest, whether verbally, in writing or by an individual’s conduct or physical gesturing. Examples of threats include “if you make that decision, I will have to hurt (or kill) you” or “I’m going to beat the hell out of you.” Also included in this definition are implied threats made seriously or in jest, whether verbally, in writing or by an individual’s conduct or physical gesturing, that a reasonable person would construe as coercive, intimidating, menacing or intended to provoke a fight. Finally, this definition includes behavior that a reasonable person would perceive as obsessively directed (*e.g.*, intensely focused on a grudge or romantic interest in another person) and reasonably likely to result in harm to a person or property, including but not limited to “stalking.”
- “*Weapon*” includes, but is not limited to explosives, firearms (including replicas and models), whether loaded or unloaded, ammunition, knives, blackjacks, batons, metal knuckles, martial arts devices (*e.g.*, throwing stars, tonfas, sais, nunchakas, etc.) and electronic defense devices (*e.g.*, stun guns and tazers).
- “*Dangerous Instrument*” means any, device, article or substance, which, under the circumstances in which it is used, attempted or threatened to be used is capable of causing death or serious injury, including but not limited to vehicles, box cutters, flashlights, hatchets, baseball bats, canes, hammers, screwdrivers and other tools or equipment.
- “*Destruction, Damage or Theft of Property*” includes, but is not limited to property crimes such as vandalism, sabotage and theft.

- “*Workplace*” includes an employee’s immediate and/or assigned workplace (whether or not on Town property) and all Town property, including, buildings, grounds, parking areas and vehicles.

## **Reporting**

- **DIAL 9-1-1 IF THERE IS AN IMMEDIATE EMERGENCY.**
- If you are the victim of behavior that you believe violates this Policy, or if you witness such behavior, immediately inform any supervisor, your department head, and/or the Department of Human Resources. Conduct that violates this Policy often constitutes a crime that also should be reported to the Police.
- Any supervisor or department head who witnesses conduct that he or she believes violates this Policy, or who receives a report of such conduct must immediately inform the Department of Human Resources, and, if appropriate, the Police Department.

## **Investigation**

All reports of conduct that violates this Policy will be taken seriously and will not be dismissed as merely being “horseplay,” “joking,” “blowing-off steam” and/or “venting.” All such reports will be promptly investigated by the Town. The alleged violator(s) will be immediately removed from Town property pending completion of the investigation and possible disciplinary action.

## **Disciplinary Action**

Employees who are found to have violated this Policy will be subject to discipline, up to and including discharge from Town service. Violator(s) also may be subject to criminal penalties.

## **No Retaliation**

The Town will not tolerate retaliation against any employee who in good faith reports conduct that he or she believes violates this Policy or who participates in any investigation of such conduct. Employees should report all instances of retaliation to any supervisor, their department head, or the Director of Human Resources. Supervisors and Directors who receive reports of retaliation must immediately notify the Director of Human Resources. Violation of this section may result in discipline, up to and including discharge.

## **Exceptions**

Sworn police personnel and/or employees whose assigned jobs require them to carry and use weapons are exempted from the portions of this Policy concerning such weapons and should refer to applicable regulations concerning this issue.

## **Malicious or Intentionally False Reporting**

The Town also may discipline/discharge any person who knowingly makes a false or malicious complaint under this Policy.

## **Protective Orders**

Employees may sometimes be involved in personal disputes that escalate to the point that injunctions or restraining orders and other court orders are sometimes obtained. We request that employees include their work address, as well as their residence in that order. Employees should inform their supervisor, department head and the Department of Human Resources of such orders and provide a description of the individual cited therein. Even in cases where the employee has not secured a court order but fears for his/her safety, we request that the employee notify the police department immediately and inform his/her supervisor as soon as practicable.

## **Preventative Action**

The Town reserves the right to take action designed to prevent threats from being carried out, and /or acts of violence or life threatening situations from occurring, including but not limited to the use of involuntary transfers. Within 90 days of such transfer, the Town will reevaluate the need to keep the employee in the new position and take appropriate action.

## **Unemployment Compensation**

Employees discharged for violation of this Policy will be considered to have engaged in “willful misconduct” within the meaning Section 31-236(a) (2) (B) of Connecticut’s unemployment compensation statutes. It is the Town’s policy to contest eligibility for unemployment compensation benefits where a former employee has been discharged for such willful misconduct.

**This policy will become effective December 14, 2010.  
Replaces previous policy dated June 15, 1999.**