

# Department of Administrative Services Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

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## *Policy Purpose*

The Department of Administrative Services is committed to providing its employees a work environment that is safe, secure and free of harassment, threats, intimidation and violence. DAS recognizes that workplace violence is a growing problem that should be addressed by all employers and therefore adopts this zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. Consistent with this policy, threats or acts of physical violence, including intimidation, harassment, and/or coercion which involve or affect DAS employees or which occur on state property will not be tolerated. Employees shall refer any questions regarding their rights and obligations under this policy to the DAS, Office of Employee Services (614-466-2136).

## *Policy Statement*

### **A. Threats or Acts of Violence Defined**

"Threats or acts of violence" include conduct against persons or property that is sufficiently severe, offensive, or intimidating to alter the conditions of state employment, or to create a hostile, abusive, or intimidating work environment for one or more DAS employees.

### **B. Definition of Workplace Violence**

Prohibited workplace violence includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- All threats or acts of violence occurring on state property, regardless of the relationship between the state and the individual involved in the incident.
- All threats or acts of violence not occurring on state property, but involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of DAS.
- All threats or acts of violence not occurring on state property, but involving an employee of DAS if the threats or acts of violence affect the legitimate interests of the state.
- Any threats or acts of violence resulting in the conviction of an employee or agent of DAS, or of an individual performing services on the department's behalf on a contract or temporary basis, under any criminal code provision relating to threats or acts of violence that adversely affect the legitimate interests of the state.

### **C. Examples of Prohibited Conduct**

Specific examples of conduct that may be considered "threats or acts of violence" prohibited under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hitting or shoving an individual.
- Threatening to harm an individual or his/her family, friends, associates, or their

property.

- The intentional destruction or threat of destruction of property owned, operated, or controlled by the state.
- Making harassing or threatening telephone calls, or sending harassing or threatening letters or other forms of written or electronic communications.
- Intimidating or attempting to coerce an employee to do wrongful acts, as defined by applicable law, administrative rule, policy, or work rule that would affect the business interests of the state.
- The willful, malicious and repeated following of another person, also known as "stalking", and making of a credible threat with intent to place the other person in reasonable fear for his or her safety.
- Making a suggestion or otherwise intimating that an act to injure persons or property is "appropriate", without regard to the location where such suggestion or intimation occurs.
- Unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of firearms, weapons, or any other dangerous devices on state property.

While some employees of DAS may be required as a condition of their work assignment to possess firearms, weapons or other dangerous devices, or permitted to carry them as authorized by law, it is departmental policy that employees are to use them only in accordance with departmental operating procedures and all applicable state and federal laws.

#### **D. Application of Prohibition**

The department's prohibition against threats and acts of violence applies to all persons involved in departmental operations, including, but not limited to, DAS personnel, contract and temporary workers, and anyone else on state property. Violations of this policy by any individual will be subject to legal action, as appropriate. Violation of this policy by a DAS employee may lead to disciplinary action up to and including termination, in accordance with the applicable law, rule or collective bargaining agreement.

#### **E. Warning Signs, Symptoms and Risk Factors**

The following are examples of warning signs, symptoms, and risk factors which may indicate an employee's potential for workplace violence:

- Dropping hints about a knowledge of firearms.
- Making intimidating statements like: "You know what happened at the Post Office," "I'll get even" or "You haven't heard the last from me."
- Possessing reading material with themes of violence, revenge and harassment.
- Keeping records of other employees the individual believes to have violated departmental policy.
- Physical signs of hard breathing, reddening of complexion, menacing stare, loudness, fast profane speech.
- Acting out either verbally or physically.
- Disgruntled employee or ex-employee who is excessively bitter.
- Being a loner.
- Having a romantic obsession with a co-worker who does not share that interest.
- History of interpersonal conflict.
- Intense anger, lack of empathy.

- Domestic problems, unstable/dysfunctional family.
- Brooding, depressed, strange behavior, "time bomb ready to go off."

Supervisors should be alerted to and aware of these indicators. If an employee exhibits such behavior the employee should be monitored and such behavior should be documented.

#### F. Crisis Management Responsibilities

In all situations, if violence appears to be imminent, **employees should take the precautions necessary to assure their own safety and the safety of others.**

The following are the critical telephone numbers which may be needed to carry out the procedures outlined in this section:

<b>Emergency Services - Police, Fire, Rescue</b>	9-911
<b>Ohio State Highway Patrol</b>	614-466-2660
<b>Building Security:</b>	
• Rhodes State Office Tower	466-7361
• Vern Riffe Center for Government	644-5250
• 4200 Surface Road	752-0006 or 466-3346
• 106 N. High Street	644-7538
• State of Ohio Computer Center	644-3812 or 644-3813
<b>DAS Office of Chief Legal Counsel</b>	614-644-1773
<b>DAS Office of Communications</b>	614-752-9521
<b>DAS Office of Employee Services</b>	614-466-2136

The following procedures shall apply in the event of a crisis situation (see also the flowchart attached to this policy):

1. The primary contact person shall be the deputy director of the affected division of DAS. He/she has authority to assume or delegate the duties required of this

- policy.
2. If the crisis situation involves an injury that requires immediate medical attention, the employee discovering the crisis should alert the appropriate medical professional by calling 9-911, contact building security and then notify a supervisor. The supervisor should contact the deputy director. The deputy director should notify the Chief Legal Counsel and the Office of Employee Services.
  3. In the event of all other crisis situations, DAS employees should notify their supervisor of the situation. The supervisor should contact building security and notify the deputy director. The deputy director should notify the Chief Legal Counsel.
  4. If no supervisor is available, the employee should contact the appropriate building security authority and notify the deputy director. The deputy director should notify the Chief Legal Counsel.
  5. Immediate action will be taken by the deputy director to ensure the safety of those involved in the crisis situation or affected by the crisis.
  6. The deputy director will notify the Director of DAS and the Chief Legal Counsel of the facts of the crisis situation as soon as possible. The deputy director will assume or assign the responsibilities of:
    - o Liaison with the law enforcement, fire, medical and other community resources offering assistance, as necessary.
    - o Spokesperson to monitor incoming calls, and document in detail everything done in response to the crisis situation.
  7. All communication with the immediate relative(s) and other employees shall be handled by the DAS Office of Employee Services.
  8. All communications with the media shall be directed to and handled by the DAS Office of Communications.
  9. In the event of threats of violence to person(s) or property by means of firearms, fire, explosions, bombs, etc., the deputy director shall be notified, the deputy director shall contact building security and the State Highway Patrol. If law enforcement authorities determine that an evacuation is necessary, personnel of the affected area will be evacuated from the threatened area and employees will be directed to the appropriate site.
  10. If a building evacuation is necessary, it will be conducted in a safe and orderly manner. The deputy director will insure that staff from each evacuated facility accounts for its personnel and that all persons are evacuated from the building. Until otherwise directed, employees must report to and remain at the evacuation site so that they may be accounted for. Responding emergency service personnel will be notified of persons not accounted for to aid in determining whether the evacuation is complete.
  11. Re-entry into the building will be restricted to emergency service and/or authorized personnel until law enforcement authorities determine the crisis is resolved and a safe re-entry can be made.
  12. In the event a person causing a crisis situation leaves the building, responsibility for preventing that person from re-entry shall be left to law enforcement authorities.

## **G. Reporting Threats or Acts of Violence**

Each employee of DAS and every person on state property is highly encouraged to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he or she is aware. In cases where the reporting individual is not a state employee, the report should be made to the Department of DAS Office of Chief Legal Counsel, who will notify the applicable Deputy Director and Ohio State Highway Patrol General Headquarters.

In cases where the reporting individual is a DAS employee, the report should be made to the reporting individual's immediate supervisor or a management level supervisory employee if the immediate supervisor is not available. The supervisor shall contact the DAS Office of Employee Services. An employee may also file a report directly with the DAS Office of Employee Services. Employee Services will notify the applicable Deputy Director and DAS Office of Chief Legal Counsel. Any such incident shall be promptly referred by the Deputy Director/Chief Legal Counsel to the appropriate management level supervisor, who shall take corrective action in accordance with the applicable law, rule or collective bargaining agreement. Concurrently with the initiation of any investigation leading to a proposed disciplinary action, the Department of Administrative Services Office of Chief Legal Counsel shall report any incidents of threats or acts of physical violence to the Ohio State Highway Patrol General Headquarters, which shall make a follow-up report to the DAS Office of Employee Services. (See flowchart attached to this policy).

#### **H. Fitness-for-Duty Evaluation**

At the discretion of the deputy director for the applicable division, an employee exhibiting warning signs, symptoms and risk factors including, but not limited to those set forth in section F of this policy, may be ordered to submit to a psychological evaluation to determine the employee's fitness-for-duty. The deputy director shall contact the DAS Office of Employee Services, which shall contact the Division of Human Resources Office of Personnel Services and identify the nature of the concern. Personnel Services will provide a list of health care providers as appropriate for the situation. The health care provider should report the results of the evaluation to the Office of Employee Services which shall then consult with the Deputy Director to determine the employee's fitness-for-duty based on the evaluation. All evaluation records shall be maintained in a confidential manner.

#### **I. Training**

DAS shall provide opportunities for employees to be trained in the risk factors associated with workplace violence, and proper handling of emergency situations in order to minimize the risks of violent incidents occurring in the workplace.

#### **J. Referral to Ohio Employee Assistance Program**

Where a supervisor suspects that an employee has work-related and/or personal problems, the supervisor should recommend that the employee contact the Ohio Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for counseling and support (614-644-8545 or 1-800-221-6327).

The DAS EAP Coordinator in the Office of Employee Services should be consulted immediately in the event of a critical incident to arrange with Ohio EAP to assist in defusing the situation. EAP should also be consulted (within 24 hours of the incident), for purposes of conducting a critical incident stress debriefing, should a critical incident occur. Examples of critical incidents include:

- hostage or riot situations
- serious injury or death of a coworker
- incidents involving use of force
- resident suicide or death
- catastrophic accidents

- agency negative publicity

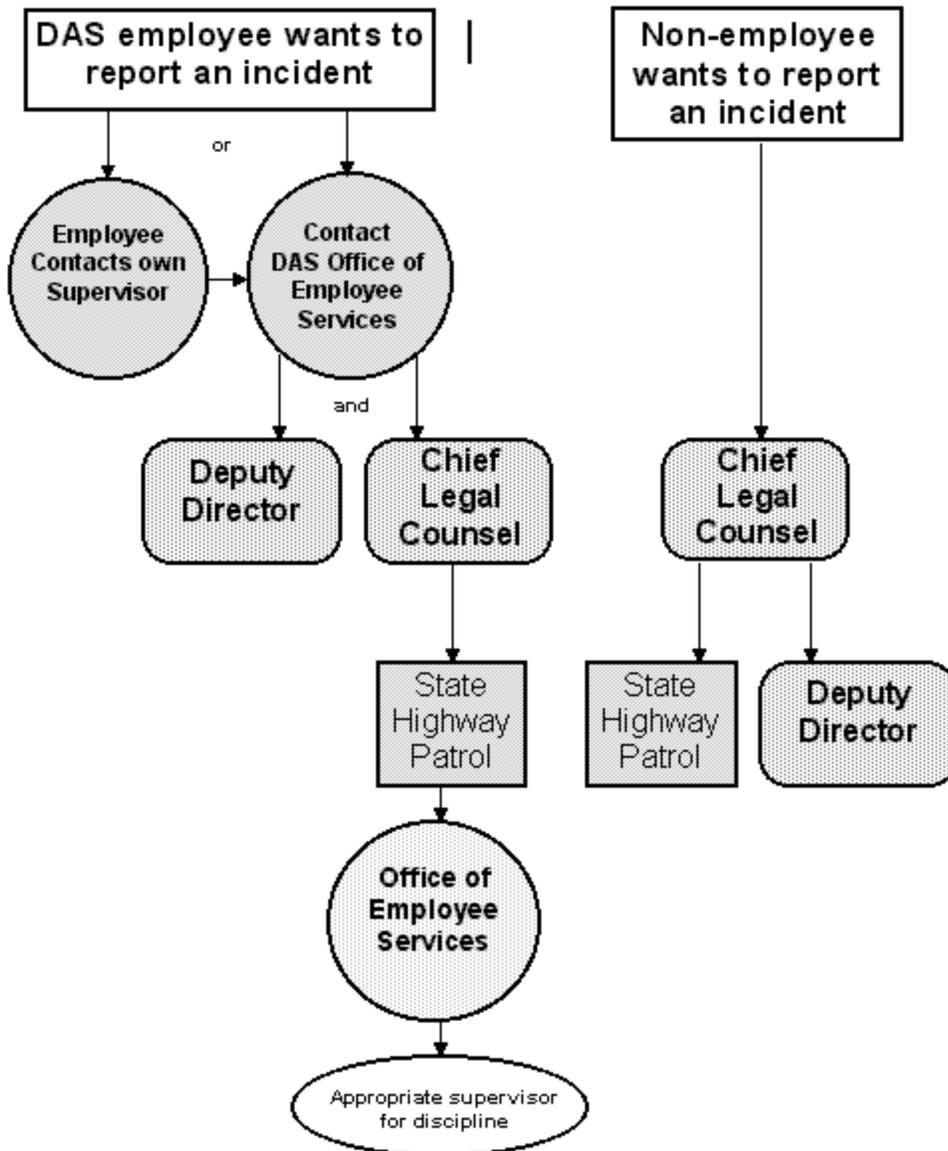
EAP should be consulted when developing employee and supervisor training programs. EAP also provides the EAP Intervention Services for Organizations in Transition which should be utilized in the event of a layoff.

#### **K. Dissemination of Policy**

All employees will be given copies of this policy. All new employees will be given a copy of this policy as part of their orientation.

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# REPORTING THREATS OR ACTS OF VIOLENCE



## CRISIS MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

