

Town of Dryden Workplace Violence Prevention Policy

PURPOSE

The Town of Dryden is committed to providing a safe and secure work environment for all employees and ensuring that their well-being is protected. The purpose of this Workplace Violence Policy is to outline the Town's zero-tolerance stance towards workplace violence, which includes any act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation, or other aggressive behavior, whether committed by employees, visitors, or any other individuals, at any location where Town staff are working, including remote work sites and sites owned by other entities.

This policy is designed to meet the requirements of New York State Labor Law Art 2 Sec 27-b. The process of complying with this law includes a workplace evaluation that was designed to identify the workplace violence hazards to which our employees could be exposed. Authorized employee representatives will and have been involved in evaluating the physical environment and reviewing incident reports to identify trends in the types of incidents reported, if any, and the effectiveness of the mitigating actions taken.

COVERAGE

This policy applies to all employees, including full-time, part-time, temporary, and contracted staff, as well as visitors, volunteers, and members of the public, who are present at any Town-owned or leased facility or while conducting Town business offsite or remotely. This policy also covers any location where Town of Dryden staff is working, including remote work, and sites owned by other entities.

DEFINITIONS

As used in this policy, the following terms shall have the meanings indicated:

Weapon: Includes but is not limited to, any offensive weapon, pistol, revolver, or other firearm, dagger, razor, stiletto, switchblade knife, or knife having a blade exceeding three inches in length.

Designated Contact Person: Management, Human Resources, and duly elected Town Supervisor.

Possession: Includes but is not limited to, the presence of a weapon on the employee, lunch box, tool kit, bag, purse, cabinets, office, etc. Weapons transported in vehicles must be legally stored in compliance with the laws of the State of New York and/or Town of Dryden Policy.

Workplace Violence: may include but is not limited to:

- A. The use of physical force with the intent to cause harm;
- B. Acts or threats in any form or manner, which are intended to intimidate, cause fear, or cause harm;
- C. The act of creating a hostile or intimidating work environment by means of words, actions, or physical contact, which would have the purpose or effect of alarming, insulting, or provoking another person.

The intentional damage to Town of Dryden owned or personal property, or acts intended to deprive use of, or cause such property to fail to operate or to operate improperly.

Worksite: Includes all property owned or occupied by the Town of Dryden, including Town of Dryden Vehicles where Town of Dryden staff is working including remote work sites and sites owned by other entities.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT

All employees, visitors, volunteers, members of the public, customers, vendors, and business associates should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Employees and volunteers should not place themselves in peril, nor should they attempt to intercede during any incident. Prohibited conduct could occur at any location where an employee or volunteer is fulfilling their job duties. Below is a non-inclusive listing of specific examples of conduct that are prohibited.

- Causing physical injury to another person
- Making threatening remarks
- Aggressive behavior that creates reasonable fear of injury or emotional distress
- Intentionally damaging Town of Dryden property or the personal property of a Town of Dryden employee, or any individual's property
- Committing acts motivated by sexual harassment or domestic violence
- Unauthorized possession of a weapon while on Town property or a Town worksite. The weapons portion of this policy does not apply to court security personnel, active members of law enforcement, or other employees or volunteers that are operating within the normal scope of their duties and using weapons as tools of their profession. Any other employee or volunteer of the Town of Dryden must provide proof of a valid weapons permit and must have written approval from the Town of Dryden Town Board to carry a weapon on a worksite. Employees or volunteers performing duties at a remote worksite that is a personal residence are subject to the laws of the State of New York with respect to possession of a weapon.

INVESTIGATION

The Town of Dryden encourages employees and volunteers to bring potential issues to the attention of a Department Head or the Human Resources Department before the situation escalates. The Town of Dryden will not discipline employees or volunteers for raising concerns.

All Town personnel are responsible for immediately notifying a designated contact person as defined above of any violent incidents or threatening behavior, including threats they have witnessed, received, or have been told that another person has witnessed or received. Members of management receiving reports of incidences of violence shall immediately notify the Town Supervisor. Town of Dryden employees or volunteers who obtain a restraining order against individuals are strongly encouraged to report the presence of a restraining order to their department head or appropriate Town Officer.

The Town Supervisor will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of threats of violence or incidents of actual violence and of suspicious individuals or activities. The identity of the individual making a report will be protected as much as reasonably possible. The Town of Dryden will not retaliate against employees or volunteers making good-faith reports of violence, threats, or suspicious individuals or activities.

To maintain workplace safety and the integrity of its investigation, the Town of Dryden may suspend employees or volunteers suspected of workplace violence or threats of violence pending investigation pursuant to policy, law, and any applicable Collective Bargaining Agreement(s).

ENFORCEMENT

Any individual found to be responsible for threats of or actual violence or other conduct that is in violation of these guidelines will be subject to prompt disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. Violators may be subject to law enforcement proceedings as well as disciplinary action imposed by the Town of Dryden pursuant to Town policy, state law and applicable collective bargaining agreement disciplinary procedures.

REVIEW, UPDATE AND COLLABORATION

The Town of Dryden Workplace Violence Prevention Policy will be reviewed annually. Whenever modifications or changes are made, they will be communicated to employees. The Town will have an ongoing role in the evaluation process, recommending methods to reduce or eliminate the hazards identified during the process and investigating workplace violence incidents or allegations. All employees and volunteers 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 individuals when on Town of Dryden property or at a Town worksite.