



POLICY ON

WORKPLACE THREATS AND VIOLENCE

Nothing is more important to the Town of East Hartford than the safety and security of its employees and the safety, security, and comfort of the public we serve. Threats, threatening behavior, or acts of violence against employees, visitors, or other individuals will not be tolerated. Violators of this policy will be subject to appropriate disciplinary and/or criminal action.

DEFINITION:

Violence referred to in this policy is defined as an act or behavior that:

1. is physically assaultive; or
2. involves carrying or displaying weapons, destroying property or throwing objects in a manner reasonably perceived to be threatening; or
3. a reasonable person would perceive as obsessively directed; for example, intensely focused on a grudge, grievance, or romantic interest in another person and reasonably likely to result in harm or threats or harm to people or property; or
4. consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to harm another individual or in any way endanger the safety of an individual; or
5. would be interpreted by a reasonable person a carrying potential for physical harm to individual; or
6. a reasonable person would perceived as menacing; or
7. consists of a communicated or reasonably perceived threat to destroy property.
8. consists to the utterance of threats or “fighting words”.

CONSEQUENCES

Any person who exhibits one or more of the above cited type of behavior against a Town of East Hartford employee, or any member of the public, shall be removed from the immediate site of the threat as quickly as safety permits, depending on the circumstances of the incident as evaluated by the Supervisor. Based on the results of an investigation, the Town will take appropriate actions.

If the alleged threatener is a Town of East Hartford employee, and if the threat involves direct physical behavior as defined in items 1 or 2 above, the employee will be suspended immediately. The suspension will be without pay, and for the maximum length of time permitted by the applicable union contract or the Town’s Personnel Rules. The Town will conduct an investigation of the alleged threat. If the investigation takes longer than

the maximum suspension, the employee will be allowed to use accrued earned days and vacation time, if any, after the suspension period has expired.

If the employee has no accrued earned days or vacation time, or if these are exhausted during the investigation, the employee may use accrued sick leave, if any. If earned days, vacation, and sick leave are exhausted before the investigation has been concluded, the employee may apply for unpaid leave of absence, permission for which will not be unreasonably withheld.

If the investigation reveals that the threat did include direct physical behavior as defined in items 1 or 2 above, the employee will be terminated immediately. Such termination may be subject to the employee's Grievance Procedure.

If the investigation determines that there was no violence or threat of violence in the alleged incident, the employee will be reimbursed for the unpaid suspension and any earned days, vacation or sick time used will be reinstated.

If the alleged threatener is not a Town of East Hartford employee, the Town's response will include suspension and/or termination of that individual's business relationship with the Town.

Whether or not the alleged threatener is a Town employee, the Town may also undertake criminal prosecution of the person or persons involved in an act of violence, as defined herein.

Management of the Town of East Hartford reserves the right to make decisions designed to prevent a threat from being carried out, a violent act from occurring, or a life-threatening situation from developing. Prevention of violence escalation may include, but will not be limited to, the transfer of an employee out of a work environment which has produced a history of threatening behavior. Within 90 days of such transfer, management will re-evaluate the need to keep the employee in the new position, and will return the employee to the previous position if appropriate. No existing Town of East Hartford policy, practice, or procedure, nor language include in any labor contract, shall be interpreted as standing in the way of such decision-making.

RESPONSIBILITIES:

All Town of East Hartford employees are responsible for notifying the Personnel Director of any threats which they have received or witnessed. Even without an actual threat, employees should report any behavior they have witnessed which they regard as threatening or violent and which might be carried out on a Town-controlled site. Employees are responsible for making this report regardless of any relationship between the individuals initiating or receiving the threats.

If the Personnel Director is not available, employees should report threats or threatening behavior to their immediate supervisor or another member of management.

Managers and supervisor are responsible for assessing situations, implementing the appropriate response, and initiating the investigatory process.

All reports or alleged workplace threats or violence will be investigated and appropriate actions taken. However, individuals making false reports or accusations will also be subject to appropriate disciplinary action and/or prosecution.

All employees who obtain a protective or restraining order which lists property owned by the Town of East Hartford among protected areas must provide to the applicable Department Director a copy of the petition and declarations used to seek the order and a copy of any temporary or permanent restraining order that is granted.

The Town of East Hartford understands the sensitive nature of the information required by this policy. Unless required otherwise by subsequent criminal action, all investigation into workplace threats will protect the confidentiality of the reporting employee or member of the public to the extent permitted by law.

A safe workplace is of paramount importance to the Town. Please feel free to share with your supervisor any suggestions you may have as to how your safety and security may be improved.

Approved by Timothy M. Larson
Mayor of the Town of East Hartford
June 15, 1999